AMBS LIBRARY, ELKHART, IN
3 9304 02009816 7

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

https://archive.org/details/mennonite201114unse

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

The Mennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002779 4

Lawrence Hart's visions of peace

January 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:
- A special section on Mennonite education
- The Underground Railroad in quilts
- Is the Mennonite church a peace church?
- Books on trust, worship, Bible
- Editorial: Resolve in the new year

Everence

Photo: Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind. by John Tirotta

Let's grow together

Welcome to the new Everence – the result of MMA and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union growing together to offer you complete financial services rooted in faith and values.

How we help

- Banking services
- Investments and retirement plans
- Charitable giving, trusts and estate planning
- Employee benefits
- Health, life, disability and long-term care insurance
- Credit and debt counseling

Talk to your local representative or visit www.everence.com to learn about the new benefits of becoming a member.

A ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches

Everence offers banking products that are federally insured. We also offer securities and other products that are not NCUA insured, may involve loss of principal, and have no credit union guarantee. Not all products are available in all states.

2101345

TheMennonite January 2011 | Volume 14, Number 1

RED RAVEN ART COMPANY, LLC
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CARLSON CULTURAL TRUST
9

ON THE COVER: Photo by National Park Service

CONTENTS

12 **Lawrence Hart's visions of peace** —Raylene Hinz-Penner

A special section on Mennonite education

18 **A family affair**—Laurie Oswald Robinson
21 **Training pastors for the church**
24 **The legacy of Mennonite education**
30 **The Underground Railroad story in quilts** —Dorothy Logan
33 **Life hurts** —Tammy Darling
37 **Shirk uses her French, Creole to help Haitians** —Sara Versluis
38 **Young adults hooked on convention** —Tim Huber
39 **South Korean partners pave way of peace** —DeVonna R. Allison
41 **Thousands of unique visitors**—Anna Groff
44 **Top 10 Mennonite Church USA events in 2010**—Anna Groff
46 **A Veterans Day lesson for this third-grader** —Everett J. Thomas
48 **Mennonite couple opens winery in Virginia** —Anna Groff
49 **Churches host art galleries for First Fridays** —Dale Gehman

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
54 For the Record
56 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
January 2011 | Volume 14, Number 1

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $43.95 to U.S. addresses and $51.45 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate Editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Assistant editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEBSITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872 ext. 34398
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016
fax: 574-535-6050

Mennonite Church USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Mennonites must give land back

I read the article about the Oct. 9, 2010, apology ceremony in Lancaster, Pa. ("Mennonites Apologize to Native Americans," November 2010) and wept the whole way through. I read all the other articles in the issue and saw words and terms like "missional," exoticism, PTSD, "at peace with war"—and found my head swimming. I keep coming back to some of the stories I have heard from my Anishnaabe family-by-marriage, and it gets harder and harder to find anything relevant in the current Mennonite discourse to the real issues facing the original peoples of Turtle Island.

Maybe all this talk, talk, talk comes down to nothing more than racism, simple and raw. My husband is right when he says the key to a right relationship is to do one's own work.

What that means for Mennonites is that all the "work" for peace and mission and antiracism needs to go on "pause" while the issues of lateral violence and historical trauma transmission in Mennonite life are addressed. Who is talking about that? Is everyone so busy talking about what the rest of the world needs to do that we can't get to the heart of what wounds us all?

Mennonites really have nothing to say to anyone anywhere about anything until stolen land is given back, treaties are recognized, recompense is made. It was all about genocide from the beginning, and Mennonite settlers were used by the colonial powers to see that genocide was carried forward.

We are all complicit because we all benefit from the results of that genocide. We have to look at that if we ever expect to be in right relationship. We have to name it for what it is and find a way together to heal the past. Our ancestors need us to do that.—*Annie Wenger-Nabigon, Sudbury, Ontario*

Luke 2 for today

In that region there are farmers in their fields, keeping watch for insurgents coming by night. Then a messenger from America stands before them, and the armed forces of America surround them, and they are afraid. But the messenger says, "Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For to you is coming this day our savior, which is bombs and more bombs. This will be a sign for you; you will find the bombs dropping from the skies all around you."

And suddenly there is with the messenger a multitude of the Predator Drones blaspheming God and saying, "Forget about God in the heavens; here on earth it is war and hatred among men."—*Peter Ediger, Las Vegas, Nev.*

Thanks for 'Thanksgiving'

I loved the "Thanksgiving" poem from Everett Thomas in the November 2010 issue. It captures an ineffable quality about family, the passage of time and life. Well done.—*Berry Friesen, Lancaster, Pa.*

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for sharing those thoughts, dreams and prayers all wrapped into one poignant piece of prose ("Thanksgiving," November 2010). From one who has traveled a similar path—uniquely personal of course—it was a heartfelt, life enriched, gut-level sharing. I have reread it several times and will continue to do so. There is something new each time, both from the prose poem and the picture.—*Randy Springer, Minier, Ill.*

Facebook conversation: At Peace With War? Nope. Just Numb

Editor's note: We posted Roger Martin's Opinion piece (November 2010) on our Facebook page. It generated a lively debate. Here is a sample of the responses:

Why aren't the churches and the people speaking out, teaching peace and doing good for the enemies, like Jesus taught? Instead, I go into Mennonite churches on the Sunday before Veterans' Day and find processions with the flag and ex-military wearing their old uniforms. In others, they have the veterans stand for applause. In still others, they have special blessings of soldiers leaving for war. What's with that? Why have we gone from peacemakers to war-honoring, military-joining people?—*Judith Vargo*

First, because we are entirely too accommodated to the world around us. We want to be mainstream Evangelical churches, so we hide and even run from our peace stance. Second, yes, we are "numb"—we think we can't make a difference anyway, so why try. That thinking paralyzes us into inaction. It's what the powers and principalities want us to think. We don't allow Jesus' Way to inform our thoughts and actions. Third, we have forgotten our heritage. We no longer teach the martyr stories to ourselves or our young people.—*Michael Smith*

I wonder why there are so many Mennonites that are listed on Facebook as being for President Obama. Obama supports war, abortion, euthanasia and the death penalty and therefore does not deserve Mennonite support.—*Jerry Stanaway*

Have Mennonites as a group ever been united against war in a public fashion? It seems that it has been a vocal minority. Peace church folks have been more interested, like other citizens, when they have been confronted by an active military draft.
—*Gary Olsen-Hasek*

Here is the issue: The church is becoming a political entity, just not a conservative one, and for most people, especially people my age, that behavior is considered appropriate. Separation of church and state only applies when conservative politics enter the picture.

We sponsor "peace" marches to Washington, D.C. What is godly about such nonsense? After refusing to participate a few years ago, I asked the person inviting me the purpose of this march. I was told because it was important to get the message in the news. I asked why God needed a six-second sound byte on the evening news. Wouldn't sponsoring an evening to pray for peace be more effective. Personally, I rated God's power above that of Dan Rather.

A [Mennonite Central Committee] office in D.C. to [relate to] Congress, and one of the first things was a hunger strike to end the war. Such action was more political than religious. We demonstrate peace [by] … providing service.—*Gayle Ann Livecchia*

Check out these and other conversations at www.facebook.com/themennonite.

IN THIS ISSUE

After two months with artwork focusing on seasonal themes (missions in November 2010 and Christmas in December 2010), we return with a cover focusing on an important Mennonite. In this case it is a leader well-known in former General Conference Mennonite Church circles: Lawrence Hart (page 12). "Hart has found ways to bring together the peace traditions of the Cheyennes and the Mennonites with a view toward reconciliation," says Raylene Hinz-Penner.

As usual in each January issue, we publish a theme section that focuses on Mennonite schools (page 18-29). We are grateful to Mennonite Education Agency for providing these articles. A feature that uses more visuals than words begins on page 30. Dorothy Logan shares "The Underground Railroad Story in Quilts."

To mark the one-year anniversary of the Haiti earthquake, we planned for some Meetinghouse coverage of Mennonite Central Committee's efforts there. However, violence erupting after the December 2010 elections and cholera outbreak has delayed this reporting. Instead, a news story about a Mennonite pastor helping Haitian refugees leads off the news section (page 37).

An annual feature is our staff's assessment of the "top 10" events in Mennonite Church USA for the recently concluded calendar year (page 44).

This issue also provides us with an opportunity to thank our many contributors (pages 50-53).

January is a good time to make format changes. We've done so by moving the News Briefs section up two pages. The reason: The business reply card we now stitch into each issue often interrupts an article that flows from one page to another. Grace and Truth is now on page 8 and poetry on page 9.—*Editor*

First racial/ethnic leaders meeting planned

GOSHEN, Ind.—Around 80 current and former racial/ethnic leaders who are connected to Mennonite Church USA are planning to gather Jan. 9-11 in Tampa, Fla., to share their experiences as leaders of color within the church and to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church through them. The event, titled "Hope … for the Future, Hope … for Change (Acts 10 and 11)," is the first multiday gathering of leaders of color.

Goals for the gathering are to support one another, develop plans for raising awareness and strengthening ownership of ongoing efforts to dismantle systemic and structural racism across the church, for sharing the leaders' observations, experiences and hopes for the future with the broader church and to provide networking opportunities for participants. The event is only open to leaders of color but will seek to engage the broader church in the future.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Oaklawn expands

GOSHEN, Ind.—Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in Elkhart County, Ind., was designated as the community health center for St. Joseph County on Sept. 24, 2010, by Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration. These services were previously provided by Madison Center in South Bend, Ind. In order to provide the outpatient services in St. Joseph County, Oaklawn leased two buildings owned by Madison Center, hired about 225 of their staff and admitted over 4,000 clients served previously by Madison Center.

The full-time equivalency of Oaklawn's staff is now 610, a 60 percent increase. Current active clients increased 57 percent to 11,000. Of the 10 MHS Alliance institutions and counseling programs, Oaklawn now ranks second in size after the Philhaven system in Pennsylvania. Philhaven has a staff FTE of 764, with an active client base of 25,000.—*Everett J. Thomas*

MWC imposes travel tax

STRASBOURG, France—Mennonite World Conference staff and executive committee members are imposing a simple surcharge on themselves for each mile they travel by air.

The plan went into effect Oct. 14, 2010, when MWC administrator Karen Martin Schiedel sent all staff and executive committee members a form to track their miles. The proceeds of the tax will go to the MWC's Global Church Sharing Fund. The fund proceeds will be earmarked specifically for environmentally green projects of MWC-member churches. Based on a formula of $50 per 2,200 pounds of carbon—the plan is expected next year to generate $2,500 of income toward the Sharing Fund.—*MWC*

Wayne Gehman

Goalie breaks record

Abby Diffenbach, center, blocks a goal during an Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., soccer game. Diffenbach broke the EMU career saves record with 457 saves and set records for career playing time and games played. She is a senior nursing major from Lancaster, Pa.—*EMU*

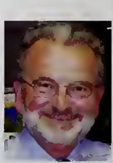
MDS opens new binational headquarters

LITITZ, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service dedicated its new binational office, multipurpose room and warehouse in Lititz on Nov. 13, 2010. In February 2006, the MDS board of directors felt it was time to increase staff capacity and facilities to train more volunteers. This decision was confirmed by the simple reality that since Hurricane Katrina, the number of families MDS serves each year has more than doubled, from 280 to 760, requiring efficient space to coordinate, train and respond to disasters.

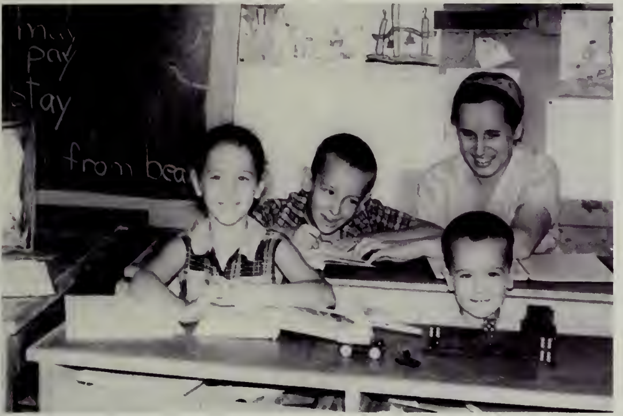
The total value of the building is estimated at $3 million. Approximately $464,000 was booked from in-kind donations and volunteer labor. To date, 90 percent of the funds have been raised or committed. Another $245,000 is still needed to complete the building project.—*MDS*

Courier editor retires

STRASBOURG, France—After completing the final issue of 2010, J. Lorne Peachey of Scottdale, Pa., retired from his position with Mennonite World Conference's *Courier-Correo-Courrier*. He became managing editor in 2002 and editor in 2006.



Peachey brought a wealth of training and experience. After earning an MA in religious journalism from Syracuse University in 1967, he edited four publications for the Mennonite church: *With*, a youth magazine which he founded (1968), *Christian Living* (1973-1984), *Gospel Herald* (1990-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1998-2000). "I had worked for the Mennonite church all my life," he says. "I was intrigued by the opportunity to broaden my horizons to the global church." Byron Rempel-Burkholder, named MWC's news editor in June 2010, succeeds Peachey as editor. His first issue will be out early this year.—*MWC*


EMM archives

Dorothy Grove, widow of EMM missionary, dies

Dorothy Grove, 84, died Nov. 6, 2010. She was the widow of Merlin Grove, a worker with Eastern Mennonite Missions, who was killed in Mogadishu, Somalia, by a radical Muslim cleric in 1962. This photo shows her in a classroom in 1960 in Mahaddei, Somalia, where she home-schooled her children, Pauline, Bruce and David.—*EMM*

MEA now partner with Church of the Brethren

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) has signed a two-year partnership covenant agreement with the Church of the Brethren to provide pastoral training in Spanish through Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano. The SeBAH program, developed by the Hispanic Pastoral and Leadership Education office of MEA, will provide its course materials, orientation and faculty; the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership will provide administrative oversight, resources and faculty for additional components specific to the Church of the Brethren denomination.

The result will be a program called SeBAH-Church of the Brethren track. Graduates of this track will receive the same "Certificate in Pastoral Ministry" as Mennonite students.

For more information go to www.MennoniteEducation.org/SeBAH. —*MEA*

Bethel's AAAA awards endowed scholarship

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—For the first time, Bethel College's African-American Alumni Association (AAAA) presented an endowed scholarship to a deserving Bethel student.

Travon Lewis, a freshman from Houston, is the first scholarship recipient.

The AAAA established an endowment fund in 2005, after several years of discussion. The idea for the fund arose from the AAAA's desire to be more involved in the Bethel community and to support students "of African-American heritage," as stated in the scholarship guidelines. The group raised funds through donations from alumni, class gifts and fund-raising events, including a regular Fall Festival booth, a Martin Luther King Jr. Day program and portions of book sales donated by AAAA's immediate past president, Sammie Simmons.—*Bethel College*

Comments wanted for Hesston reaccreditation

HESSTON, Kan.—A team from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools will visit Hesston (Kan.) College for a comprehensive reaccreditation evaluation March 21-23. Hesston College invites the public to provide written comments to the Commission that will be forwarded to the evaluation team for its review. Comments must address matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs and must be in writing and signed. Submit comments to Public Comment on Hesston College, The Higher Learning Commission, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604, by Feb. 21. —*Hesston College*

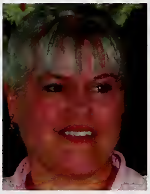
Co-directors for Mennonite Women USA

GOSHEN, Ind.—Ruth Lapp Guengerich and Rhoda Keener will begin as co-executive directors for Mennonite Women USA on May 1. Keener will focus on financial development and Sister Care, with Guengerich focusing on program and administration. The job-share arrangement was approved by the MW USA board on Oct. 30, 2010. Guengerich has served as board president for MW USA since 2009 and will conclude her work with Mennonite Mission Network on March 24. Keener has served as the sole executive director of Mennonite Women USA for the past 10 years. —*Mennonite Church USA*

Hauerwas on radio show

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Stanley Hauerwas, Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C., was interviewed on the Shaping Families radio program in December 2010. He was named "Best Theologian in America" by *Time* magazine in 2001. Shaping Families (www.ShapingFamilies.com) is produced by ThirdWay Media.—*MMN*

Seeking direction



Donna Mast serves half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and half-time as interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Some people have this marvelous ability to navigate their way through unfamiliar territory. They know at any given moment what direction they are facing and seem to have an innate ability to understand the lay of the land, no matter where they are.

Not so with me. I am more directionally impaired than I care to admit on this printed page.

Growing up in the flatlands of Ohio, I thought I had a pretty good sense of direction. Since living in mountainous territory with winding roads that sometimes go north to go south, I have discovered that I have no sense of direction at all. What I really had, growing up in the flatlands, was an ability to read a grid. And I find myself envious of those who can tell their right hand from their left without having to stop and think about it.

When Global Positioning Systems first came on the market, my husband told me never to buy one for him because it would be an insult to his intelligence. My husband is one of those people I envy. I lack his kind of intelligence.

When I took a second half-time position, I had a bigger problem than envy. This second position frequently takes me into country I have not traveled before, and I am often traveling alone. So I bought myself a GPS. It has given me confidence to make the trips.

Recently I was again traveling on unfamiliar roads, and this time I was in heavy fog as well. Was I ever grateful for my GPS! It told me when I was coming to the next turn, and I could navigate even though I could not see the road until I was upon it.

I know that there will be more fog, as well as other conditions that make it difficult to see.

As I traveled in this strange silence of muted sound and masked visibility, I thought about how it was like traveling this earthly path with God. How often do we come to decision points in our lives and wonder where the path lies? Is God calling me in a new direction? Should I take this route or another?

The Psalms are full of images about God leading us along paths. One example is Psalm 119:105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." If the Psalmist were writing today, it might have been written, "Your word is a Magellan to my feet and a Garmin to my path." The Psalmist looked to Holy Law for direction in life. We, too, search the Scriptures and apply them to our lives.

Jesus is also known as The Word. John 1 tells us: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it."

As Anabaptists, we look closely to the life of Jesus for direction in how to live our lives. Jesus will illumine our paths, if we only allow him to do so.

But we are not dependent solely on Scripture. Jesus promised us the Spirit, who will guide us into all truth (John 16:13). Discerning the Spirit's direction sometimes feels like driving in dense fog. Following the Spirit's direction is made easier if we are listening through prayer, in the company of other Christians and with the words of the Bible in our heads and hearts.

I traveled through the fog for an hour and a half. It should have been an hour, but I was going slower, due to the lack of visibility. I also have to admit that at one point I saw a road that someone had told me was a shortcut, so I took it. My GPS told me to turn around. I didn't. I just figured it needed time to make the adjustment since I had chosen to take a different route.

When I finally decided to listen to my GPS, I realized that the road I had impulsively taken was a shortcut but not from the point I had decided to jump on it. I had become like the person described in Proverbs 10:17: "Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray."

I eventually turned around and returned to the correct road. I am thankful we serve a God who does not give up on us but sends us signals when we are on the wrong path and welcomes us gladly back onto the right path.

What a relief it was when the fog lifted and I could see farther ahead. As I continue to travel, I know there will be more fog, as well as other conditions that make it difficult to see. That's life. As we journey with God, we do have times of greater and lesser abilities to see the road.

In this new year, may we each travel with God's Word within us, Jesus' example before us, in the company of Christian friends as God's Spirit guides us into the future. TM

Pie

by Julie Cadwallader-Staub

Skin, like piecrust, was invented
to keep our insides in
and the outside out.
Like piecrust, skin is surprisingly tough,
stretches beyond imagining
and can be patched with pieces of its own self,
leaving it strong in the broken places.

Thirty years ago this month, I prepared for my wedding;
Twenty years ago, I was raising three children under the age of 5;
Ten years ago, my husband was diagnosed with terminal cancer
and we lost him.

Tell me, to whom do we belong if not to one another?
Doesn't a longing for belonging
mark us as human beings?

The One who mixed flour and water
fashioned us to be functional, resilient, beautiful—
doesn't that same Spirit pierce us
again and again
to let the inside out
and the outside in
that we might pray
and change
and recognize our need for one another
and for the One who made us,

that we might embody the same gravitational force
exerted by a pie, just out of the oven:
the way it pulls people together, out of every dark corner,
with its fragrant promise of communion and joy?

Julie Cadwallader-Staub lives in South Burlington, Vt., and is author of Face to Face: Poems *(DreamSeeker Books, 2010, $12.95).*

A short history of the economic crisis and how to address it

Robert B. Reich, a professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, used last Labor Day as an occasion to write in the *New York Times* about the U.S. economic crisis. He notes that it began “decades ago, when a new wave of technology … made it cheaper for American employers to use low-wage labor abroad or labor-replacing software here at home than to continue paying the typical worker a middle-class wage. Even though the American economy kept growing, hourly wages flattened. The median male worker earns less today, adjusted for inflation, than he did 30 years ago.”

He asks, How did American families keep their spending on pace with overall economic growth? “First, women streamed into the paid work force. By the late 1990s, more than 60 percent of mothers with young children worked outside the home (in 1966, only 24 percent did).

“Second, everyone put in more hours. What families didn’t receive in wage increases they made up for in work increases. By the mid-2000s, the typical male worker was putting in roughly 100 hours more each year than two decades before, and the typical female worker about 200 hours more.

“When American families couldn’t squeeze any more income out of these two coping mechanisms, they embarked on a third: going ever deeper into debt. This seemed painless—as long as home prices were soaring. From 2002 to 2007, American households extracted $2.3 trillion from their homes.”

However, the debt bubble burst. Now, even if nearly everyone was employed, the vast middle class still wouldn’t have enough money to buy what the economy is capable of producing.

Reich asks, Where have all the economic gains gone? Mostly to the top. He refers to economists Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty, who examined tax returns from 1913 to 2008. “In the late 1970s, the richest 1 percent of American families took in about 9 percent of the nation’s total income; by 2007, the top 1 percent took in 23.5 percent of total income.”

The last time income was this concentrated was in 1928. Reich points out that “the rich spend a much smaller proportion of their incomes than the rest of us. So when they get a disproportionate share of total income, the economy is robbed of the demand it needs to keep growing and creating jobs.”

Further, he writes, “the rich don’t necessarily invest their earnings and savings in the American economy. They send them around the globe where they’ll get the highest returns.”

We learned from the Great Depression and its aftermath that there is only one way back to full recovery, writes Reich: “through more widely shared prosperity. In the 1930s, the American economy was completely restructured. New Deal measures leveled the playing field.

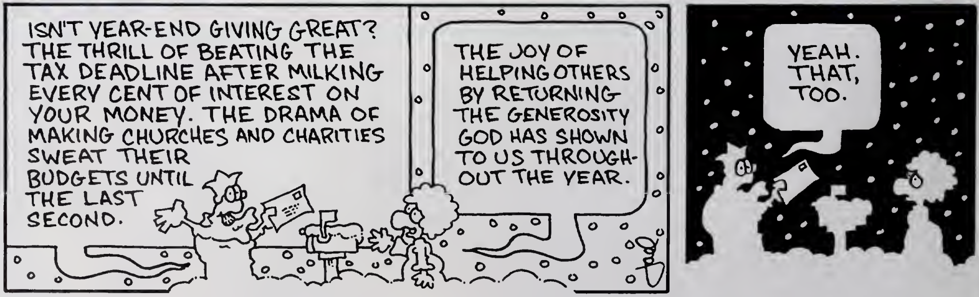
In the decades after World War II, various laws further reduced economic inequality. “Much of this was paid for with a 70 to 90 percent marginal income tax on the highest incomes.” The result: rapid growth and more jobs.

By contrast, Reich writes, “little has been done since 2008 to widen the circle of prosperity. Health-care reform is an important step forward, but it’s not nearly enough.”

He offers ideas for how to raise wages and thereby spur the economy, then concludes: “Policies that generate more widely shared prosperity lead to stronger and more sustainable economic growth. … The rich are better off with a smaller percentage of a fast-growing economy than a larger share of an economy that’s barely moving.” *Gordon Houser*

Pontius’ Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


ISN'T YEAR-END GIVING GREAT? THE THRILL OF BEATING THE TAX DEADLINE AFTER MILKING EVERY CENT OF INTEREST ON YOUR MONEY. THE DRAMA OF MAKING CHURCHES AND CHARITIES SWEAT THEIR BUDGETS UNTIL THE LAST SECOND.
THE JOY OF HELPING OTHERS BY RETURNING THE GENEROSITY GOD HAS SHOWN TO US THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.
YEAH. THAT, TOO.

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “Americans have an appetite for government benefits that greatly exceeds their appetite for taxes.”
>
> —*Fareed Zakaria in* Time

Turn cell phones on

One evening at the July 17-22, 2010, Church of the Brethren National Youth Convention in Fort Collins, Colo., the speaker asked participants to turn on their cell phones and text their answers to this question: What does it look like when the mystery of love fills you? Through a service called Poll Everywhere, the text messages scrolled across a screen up front. One message read, “It looks like 3,000 Brethren at worship.”—*Messenger*

Anti-immigration sentiments in Germany, Europe

More than 30 percent of Germans believe their country is being overrun by foreigners, according to a survey conducted by a German think tank associated with the center-left Social Democratic Party. Thirteen percent of the population would welcome a “Führer”—a title associated with Hitler—meaning someone who would run the country with a firm hand. About 60 percent of Germans would “restrict the practice of Islam,” and 17 percent believe that Jews have “too much influence” in the country. The anti-immigrant sentiment is shared by other European countries, some of which have tried to pay Africans to move back home.—*The Christian Century*

A road trip through the Bible

Pastor Bruce Wersen of His Place Community Church in Burlington Wash., 48, a film student-turned-preacher, writes, produces and stars as the hapless driver in *Route 66: A Road Trip Through the Bible*, an online video series that presents each of the Bible’s 66 books as conversations with hitchhikers in his clunker convertible. The video clips, available at http://www.route66bible.com, are paired with sermons and reading guides.—*Religion News Service*

Numbers to ponder

- Percentage of 5,296 “green” products surveyed in the United States and Canada found to have made unproven environmental claims: **95**
- Percentage of deaths in the developing world that are linked to environmental factors, according to the World Health Organization: **25**
- Yearly loss in productivity and health costs due to obesity among full-time U.S. employees: **$73 billion**
- Number of people worldwide each year who suffer from lead poisoning, often due to improper recycling of car batteries: **12 million**—*Time*

29 million feet of Bibles

If you stacked all the Bibles sitting in American homes, the tower would rise 29 million feet, nearly 1,000 times the height of Mount Everest. More than 90 percent of American households own a Bible, and the average family owns three, according to pollsters at the Barna Group.—*Religion News Service*

Cheaper than war

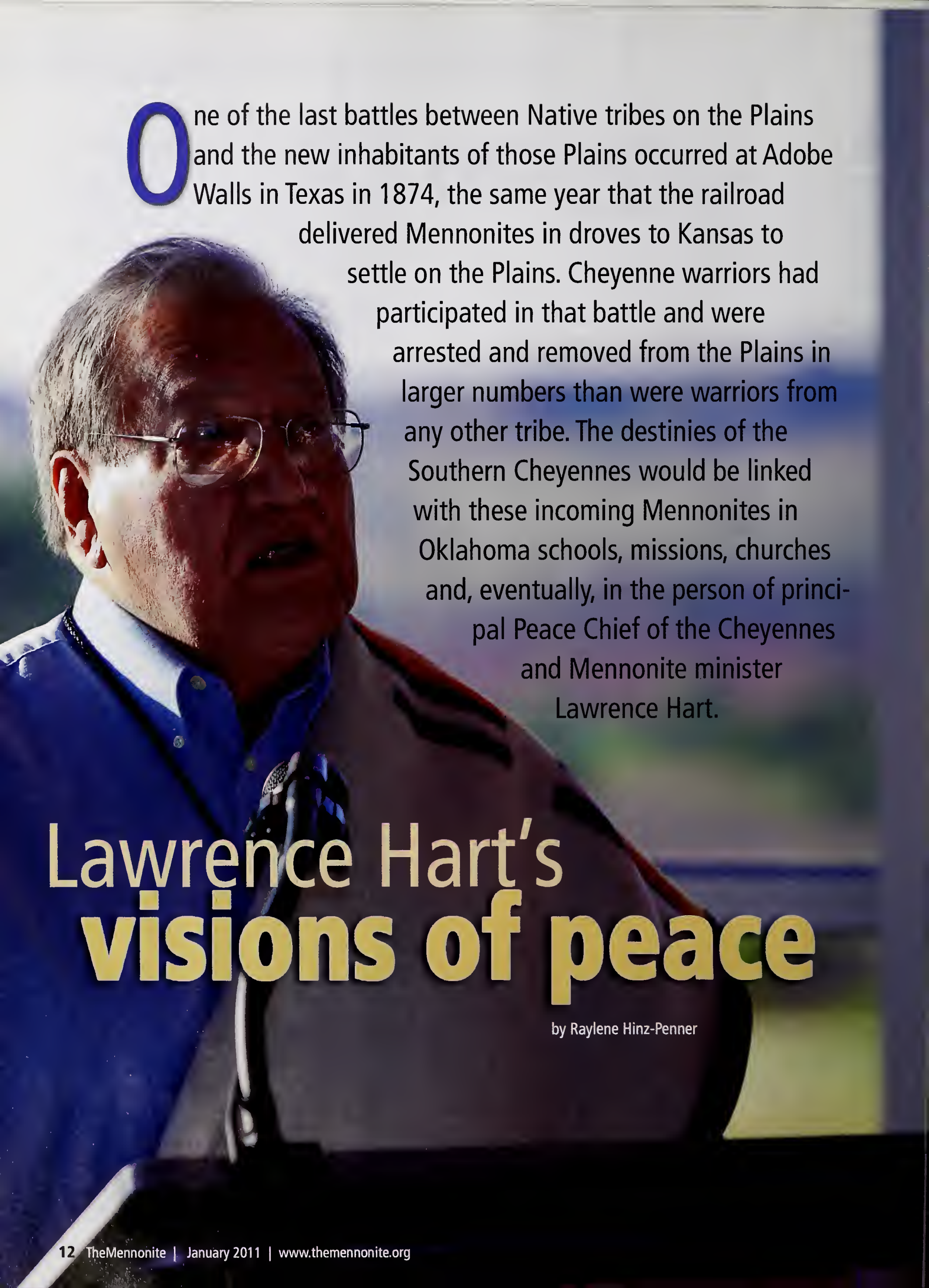
Susan Retik and Patti Quigley were made widows by the attacks of 9/11. In response to their loss they formed Beyond the 11th, a not-for-profit organization that has helped more than 1,000 Afghan widows start businesses, including one that makes soccer balls and one that raises chickens for selling eggs. The project also supports a women’s center where carpets are woven for export and a literacy center with a bakery. The work of Beyond the 11th over the past nine years has cost less than keeping one American soldier in Afghanistan for eight months.—*New York Times*

16 life values

The Remembrance Study offered a list of 110 possible life values. Each respondent was asked to choose the top six values for which he or she wanted to be remembered.

1. being a good friend
2. being a good parent
3. care of family
4. creativity
5. empathy
6. faithfulness
7. fairness
8. generosity
9. hard work
10. helping others
11. intelligence/being smart
12. kindness
13. love of God, love of fellow man/woman
14. team player vs. tough negotiator
15. patriotism
16. making lots of money

—*Spirituality & Health*



One of the last battles between Native tribes on the Plains and the new inhabitants of those Plains occurred at Adobe Walls in Texas in 1874, the same year that the railroad delivered Mennonites in droves to Kansas to settle on the Plains. Cheyenne warriors had participated in that battle and were arrested and removed from the Plains in larger numbers than were warriors from any other tribe. The destinies of the Southern Cheyennes would be linked with these incoming Mennonites in Oklahoma schools, missions, churches and, eventually, in the person of principal Peace Chief of the Cheyennes and Mennonite minister Lawrence Hart.

Lawrence Hart's visions of peace

by Raylene Hinz-Penner

Lawrence Hart has worked to bring reconciliation between two peoples—Cheyenne and Mennonite.

Lawrence Hart speaks at the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site at Cheyenne, Okla., on Aug. 28, 2010. Photo by the National Park Service

Lawrence Hart was born into the Cheyenne tribal community on his family's allotment near Hammon, Okla., in 1933 during the hard years of the Depression. The sixth child of Homer and Jennie Hart, he was delivered and taken to her own home by the midwife for the tribe, Cornstalk, his paternal grandmother, when his mother was too ill to care for him. He spent his childhood years with his paternal grandparents, Corn Stalk and Chief John P. Hart (formerly Peak Heart, but the name was changed after he attended Carlisle Indian Boarding School in Pennsylvania).

Chief John P. Hart handpicked Lawrence to teach him the ways of the Cheyenne people.

Because he lived with his grandparents across the yard from his parents' home, the young Lawrence spoke Cheyenne; his grandmother never learned to speak English. His grandfather, Chief John P. Hart, was the son of Afraid of Beavers and Walking Woman, both survivors of the massacre of the village of the great Peace Chief Black Kettle on the Washita River in Oklahoma in 1868. Chief John P. Hart handpicked Lawrence to teach him the ways of the Cheyenne people. When Lawrence reached school age, his parents came to his grandparents bearing gifts of gratitude for their help in rearing him during his early years and brought Lawrence home to put him in the local school where he learned to speak English. Lawrence remained close to his grandfather, traveling with him during the summers, when, as a peacemaker between tribes and well-known missionary of the Native American Church, Chief John P. Hart conducted services with the Ute Mountain Utes in Colorado and around the Four Corners region in Colorado.

Lawrence's parents, Homer and Jennie Hart, were able to survive the Depression on their family's allotment. They also provided key support as lay ministers in the local Hammon Mennonite Church, where Lawrence grew up. Homer Hart, who translated for the missionary pastors,

Lawrence Hart (left) greets Alden Miller, Superintendent at Sand Creek National Historic Site. Photo by the National Park Service

preached in Hammon and surrounding areas for 40 years. Selected for his helper at age 12 by Rev. H.J. Kliewer, the first pastor to the Hammon Church, Homer had converted to Christianity and become an active Mennonite by age 17. The first baptisms at Hammon had been performed by Rudolphe Petter, the Swiss Mennonite linguist who would translate the Bible into Cheyenne and write the Cheyenne dictionary. Lawrence tells the story of his older brother Sam and him as high school age teens listening carefully to their father each time he was called upon to translate an entire sermon from English to Cheyenne, not line by line, but in its entirety, during which they were never able to catch him omitting a single story or illustration from the missionary's original English version.

He has spent his life negotiating this delicate stance, one foot in the Cheyenne world, one foot in the Mennonite world, a sometimes prophet to his mixed flock.

Rev. Arthur Friesen, Lawrence Hart's pastor during his high school years at Hammon High School, would send Lawrence into the Mennonite world. When he and Lawrence discussed colleges, Rev. Friesen mentioned that there was Bacone Indian College in eastern Oklahoma, which he believed to be a fine school, but there was also his own alma mater, Bethel College, which he told Lawrence was an excellent college. Pastor Friesen remembered the young Lawrence saying that since he would have to live with white people, he might as well start. Thus, Lawrence attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., for two years, 1953-55, before he left to realize his dream of flying jet fighter planes in the Navy. He married fellow Bethel College student Betty Bartel, a young Mennonite woman of the Bruderthal Church of Hillsboro, Kan., and they became partners in church and tribal work.

When Grandfather Chief John P. Hart died, Lawrence was called out of the military to become a Peace Chief of the Cheyennes—after which he returned to finish his history degree at Bethel and go on to study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., to become a Mennonite pastor. Thus, he grew into a principal Peace Chief to the Cheyennes, a Mennonite pastor at Koinonia Church near Clinton, Okla., and a leader in the Mennonite church. He has spent his life negotiating this delicate stance, one foot in the Cheyenne world, one foot in the Mennonite world, a sometimes prophet to his mixed flock. Always he has served as peacemaker, cultivating the traditions of servanthood in the peace chief tradition, reinterpreting Bible stories for Mennonites and Cheyennes to help his diverse flocks understand the tribal Jesus he knows. He has taken on a myriad of roles as peacemaker: chief, preacher, orator, negotiator, testifier, surveyor, protester, cultural historian, carpenter and more.

Lawrence Hart still remembers the Mennonite gathering in Fresno, Calif., where as a young pastor he told for the first time the story that changed his life and helped him understand the servant leadership he would be called to practice. Peace testimonials were called for, and Lawrence found himself going forward to take the microphone. His story of the reenactment on the Washita, an event that occurred in 1968, 100 years after the massacre of his people on that site, would presage the work Chief Hart would be called to do in the Return to the Earth project in later years.

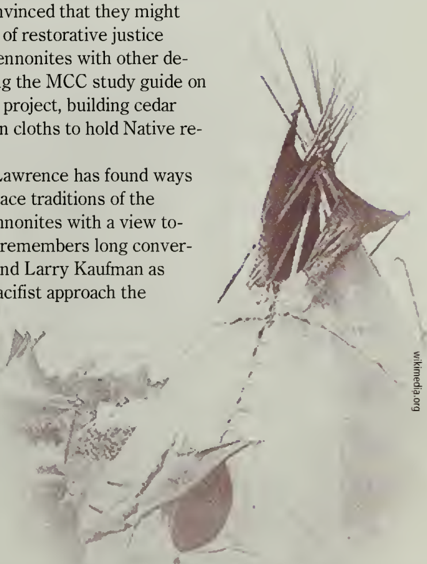
Lawrence and Betty Hart and their two young children, Connie and Nathan—youngest daughter Christina was not yet born—had agreed to participate with the Cheyenne people in a commemorative historical reenactment of the Washita Battle of 1868 on the condition that the local museum in Cheyenne, Okla., bury the Cheyenne remains that had been recovered from that battle but were still in the museum. The Cheyenne people set up on the original site of the battle beside the Washita River and appeared in their traditional garb. But they had not been told that the Grandsons of General Custer's Seventh Cavalry from California would be in attendance, and there was an ugly scene far too real as the Grandsons came thundering in on horseback firing weapons, the Cheyenne children screaming in terror. The Cavalry even played the battle tune, "Garry Owen," that their grandfathers had used on that fateful day 100 years earlier. Finally, the enactment over, the old chiefs huddled with Lawrence, a young chief, and made their way into Cheyenne to the museum to bury the remains as they had promised, with the careful dignity and ceremonial songs mandated by Cheyenne tradition. Again, the Grandsons of the Seventh Cavalry showed up to salute, and the young Chief Lawrence Hart was horrified that they would tread on this hallowed ground to salute one their grandfathers had killed.

Then, as the small coffin was carried by the crowd to the burial site, a young woman, Lucille Young Bull, respectfully stepped out of the crowd and placed a blanket over the coffin. Cheyenne tradition mandated that this blanket be given to someone in attendance before the burial, someone like the governor of Oklahoma, who was in attendance that day. However, the old chiefs instructed young Chief Hart to call forward Captain Eric Gault, the commander of the Grandsons: They chose him to wrap in the blanket. Onlookers were moved powerfully by the wisdom of the old chiefs—as was the Captain, who took the "Garry Owen" pin from his uniform and handed it to Chief Hart to accept for his people, promising that the Cheyenne people would never again hear this battle song.

Hart has found ways to bring together the peace traditions of the Cheyennes and the Mennonites with a view toward reconciliation.

Years later, as a NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) reviewer, Chief Lawrence Hart discovered that there were thousands of Native remains on shelves in museums in the United States, and he took as his mission the work of burying them with dignity—enlisting the aid of Mennonite Central Committee and denominations all over the country in the ongoing project designated "Return to the Earth." Chief Hart has established a site at the Cheyenne Cultural Center outside Clinton, Okla., as a place where up to 25,000 of the remains, still unidentified and thus unclaimed by the tribes, might be returned to the earth. Convinced that they might perform some small act of restorative justice through their action, Mennonites with other denominations are studying the MCC study guide on the Return to the Earth project, building cedar boxes and cutting muslin cloths to hold Native remains for burial.

Working with Betty, Lawrence has found ways to bring together the peace traditions of the Cheyennes and the Mennonites with a view toward reconciliation. He remembers long conversations with college friend Larry Kaufman as he struggled with the pacifist approach the Mennonites taught in a church history course he took while a student at Bethel. Later, he experienced a profound sense of call upon learning of Larry's death by ▶



wikimedia.org

During "An Evening to Honor and Recognize Chief Lawrence Hart" by the National Park Service at the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site at Cheyenne, Okla., on Aug. 28, 2010, Hart greets a well-wisher. Behind him, from left, are granddaughter Christina Yellowman, daughter Connie Hart Yellowman and daughter Cristina Hart-Wolfe. Photo by National Park Service

drowning in the Congo in 1956 as part of the first group of PAX men to serve in the Congo.

Lawrence and Betty Hart have hosted hundreds of people to teach history, tradition and ritual—both Mennonite and Cheyenne.

Lawrence later said he determined that if he were to lose his life, he wanted to lose it as his friend Larry Kaufman had, in the cause of peace. As a peace chief, too, he was called by the Cheyenne tradition to a life of service and peace in which revenge was forbidden.

In 2004, Lawrence Hart brought his friend Howard Zehr with his *Little Book of Restorative Justice* to the Sovereignty Symposium in Oklahoma City to the annual meeting of the tribes and Oklahoma legal experts to discuss the Cheyenne way of justice. *The Cheyenne Way* (Llewelyn and Hoebel, 1941) had long been studied by experts and is still used today in legal studies. Lawrence himself had built that winter the red cedar stands that held the pictures and case stories detailing the Cheyenne way practiced by his tribe. Howard Zehr discussed the concept of restorative justice and as an international expert confirmed Lawrence's belief that the Cheyenne people did indeed practice concepts of restorative justice. Then, as preacher and Cheyenne peace chief, Lawrence Hart closed the discussion at the Symposium, showing how the Hebrew tradition of justice dovetails with Cheyenne justice, neither being Anglo models. In the Cheyenne stories depicted in the display, the audience could witness the Cheyenne practice of making a way for the offender to re-enter the tribe.

For more than 40 years, working together with Betty, Lawrence has pastored Koinonia Mennonite Church, just outside Clinton, Okla., with Cheyenne worshippers. Nearby they built the Cheyenne Cultural Center, and from those two locations they have hosted hundreds of people to teach history, tradition and ritual—both Mennonite and Cheyenne. In a major undertaking in 2006, underwritten and planned by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, that brought together people from across the United States, Lawrence and Betty Hart led the planning and hosting of "Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington," a conference in Clinton, Okla., to celebrate and review the interconnected faith stories of the Native tribes and the first Mennonite mission that had begun 120 years earlier. (See April 18, 2006, page 19.)

In 2000, at the Native Assembly gathered on the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, Hart delivered a compelling manifesto he titled "Culture and Christianity," Hart's answer to the questions of Christ and culture. He spoke of a tribal Jesus too often whitewashed in the Euro-Western reading of the Scriptures. The Jesus way he explicated for his mostly Native audience described a tribal Jesus who healed by using rituals akin to those used by the Cheyenne people. Hart cited Mark 8, where Jesus uses his own spittle to heal a blind man as the Cheyennes use spittle in purification ceremonies. Jesus' sojourn on earth as a tribal person manifests God's choice to reveal himself in a way no televangelist in a luxurious sanctuary will ever understand, Hart said. Rather, this Jesus, born in a manger with dust on his feet, was not Anglo; tribal lenses for viewing Jesus' ministry have a better chance than the Anglo lens for seeing Jesus for who he was.

Hart concluded that address as he does so much of his oratory—with a lament for both Cheyennes and Mennonites who have lost their respect for and connection to the earth. Hart as historian often recalls that songs sung in the Cheyenne tradition to express the Christian faith must be connected to the earth. Though an English version of a song may not include reference to the earth, the Cheyenne translation must recognize the sacred earth. He cites the old German Christmas carol, "Silent Night," translated by Rudolphe Petter, the Swiss missionary linguist, aided by informant Harvey Whiteshield. For Hart the Incarnation is an impossible concept without the Cheyenne word for earth, "ho 'e va," embedded in its expression. The axis mundi too, that center pole that stands for a connection between heaven and earth in tribal ritual, is an understanding central to Lawrence Hart's theology that God's love comes to touch his people where they are on earth. Hart reads John's vision quest in the book of Revelation as a heavenly manifestation of humanity's myriad cultural forms of worship.

Creativity may be the greatest attribute of the peacemaker. In the person of Lawrence Hart, envisioning peace has meant reinterpreting history, reimagining the biblical story, bringing to Anabaptist theology the tribal views he learned as a child. Even as his own life has moved between Native and dominant cultures, military and pacifist, government and populist, he is able to bring together unlikely elements for a new vision of the possible. Not until he could compare the Washita site where his ancestors died to the Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah Building was he able to convince those in the Senate hearings to secure those grounds as a national historic site. He has compared the martyrdom of Chief Black Kettle in the Washita River to that of the Anabaptist Felix Mantz, who was drowned in the cold waters of the Limmat in Zurich. He called on Amish craftsmen for help in building the cedar boxes to remove his ancestors' remains from the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. He sees in the Cheyenne priest who blesses the earth toward the four directions the words of the Psalmist. Chief Hart's oratory, which so often fuses cultures and rituals, eras in time, the public and the sacred, the denominational and the tribal, is powerful in its testimony to the life he himself has lived in complete humility as both warrior and peacemaker, servant and chief, statesman and prophet.

Jesus' sojourn on earth as a tribal person manifests God's choice to reveal himself in a way no televangelist in a luxurious sanctuary will ever understand.

Raylene Hinz-Penner teaches English at Washburn University, Topeka, Kan., is a member of Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka and is author of Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite *(Cascadia Publishing House, 2007, $19.95).*

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

A family affair

Mennonite education includes family members across generations.

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary students Hilary Scarsella (left) and Virginia Gerbrandt leave Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount on the Elkhart, Ind., campus after the first worship service in the fall 2009 semester. Photo by Peter Ringenberg

In eighth grade, Rachel Roth Sawatzky came back to the United States from Africa with her mission worker parents Lynn and Kathleen Roth. Because finances were tight, she helped pay tuition at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School (LMS) by babysitting and waitressing.

She wasn't seeking a Christ-centered education that focused on academic excellence, community, service and discipleship. She simply wanted a good social life.

But now she sees the impact that decision had on her later choices. She went on to attend Goshen (Ind.) College and graduated from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va. Most recently, she's become director of admissions for Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen.

"Making the transition was brutal for me socially," says Sawatzky, who attended Hinkletown (Pa.) Mennonite School for a year before entering LMS as a freshman. "I believed a Mennonite high school would be more accepting of me as a third-culture kid. I didn't know all the social rules, and I was very much outside the mainstream.

"But I see now that Mennonite schools reinforced what I was learning at home and at church. It provided a holistic perspective. It is easy for kids to have a church self and a social self. Mennonite education helped me integrate my life and make more integrated choices later on."

She is only one example of her family's commitment to the church. Her father is director of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at EMU, and her mother is director of EMU's Intensive English Program. Her three siblings graduated from Mennonite colleges, and a couple of them now work at those colleges.

This legacy was shaped largely by the example of her parents. After their longtime work with Mennonite Central Committee overseas, Lynn Roth served as director of East Coast MCC, and Kathleen Roth taught at Hinkletown and then became director of a Mennonite day-care center.

Several years ago, they began at EMU. "We both work with international students at EMU, and so our work is a natural transition from MCC," Lynn Roth says.

Education is one of the things the Mennonite church does very well. It is our gift to the world.
—Kathleen Roth

Kathleen Roth says: "I feel strongly about Mennonite education and so I wanted to pass that value on to our children. Education is one of the things the Mennonite church does very well. It is our gift to the world."

Gifting generations with a Mennonite education

Many Mennonite families believe Anabaptist schools give gifts to the world through their students. For example, the extended family of Peter and Reta Mae Wiebe, Glendale, Ariz., represents a half-century of attendance at Anabaptist schools, ranging from high schools through seminary.

As graduates of Goshen College, they encouraged their eight children and 18 grandchildren to attend Mennonite schools, including Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio, Hesston (Kan.) College, Goshen College, EMU and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

The couple has provided a portion of the funding each year a child or grandchild attended. It is not an investment calculated in dollars, because its dividends are spiritual, says Peter Wiebe, a longtime Mennonite pastor who has also served in many other roles throughout the church.

"There is no good way to nurture a thriving Mennonite Anabaptist expression in our world apart from our schools," he says. "They pass on a deep understanding of Anabaptist theology and history and foster a discipleship rooted in Jesus.

"We weren't just buying years of education," he says. "The investment extends into their vocational choices and their decisions to remain in the Mennonite church."

Grandson Nick Meyer is a recipient of their blessing. A graduate of both Central Christian and EMU, he is now a landscaper at EMU. He attends a local Mennonite congregation, Early Church, which ministers to the homeless, and is taking some classes at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg.

More than being grateful for funds, he is grateful for the faith they fostered.

"The faculty and staff at these schools care about the whole person—not just about classroom learning," he says. "Chapels, cross-cultural experiences and a focus on peacemaking and creation care formed me to engage with the world in the context of Anabaptist faith."

God had other plans that have become a win-win situation for everyone because now I am involved in helping other Hispanics get pastoral training right in their churches.—Rafael Barahona

Generations learning together

The Wiebes attended college a generation before their children. But Rafael and Pilar Barahona attended Goshen College simultaneously with their daughter, Anita, an art student. In 1993, they left pastoral ministry in Canada to enroll in the former Hispanic Ministries Program at Goshen College.

"I had planned to go back to Canada when I graduated to be involved in pastoral work again," says Rafael Barahona, associate director of the Hispanic Pastoral and Leadership Education office of Mennonite Education Agency (MEA). "God had other plans that have become a win-win situation for everyone because now I am involved in helping other Hispanics get pastoral training right in their churches."

For the past 10 years, Pilar Barahona has worked at Goshen High School as an English learner collaborator. She believes her children's involvement in a Mennonite college has helped them remain engaged with the church.

Their son, Rafael Jr., also a Goshen graduate, confirms her viewpoint. He lives in Charlottesville, Va., where he is a member of Charlottesville Mennonite Church.

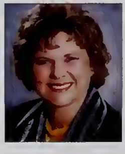
"To be uprooted was very difficult," he says. "In retrospect, I am thankful for how the experience shaped me, even though it was hard at the time. Throughout all the transitions, my parents were very supportive. The message they sent was that they loved us and were proud of us and hoped we would remain faithful to the Lord, no matter where our path led."

Entire families engaging in the church

Remaining faithful to the Lord can mean a simultaneous family-wide engagement within Mennonite Church USA. For example, Bryan and Anita Kehr recently moved to Newton, Kan. She is the new lead pastor at First Mennonite Church, and he is Hesston College's women's soccer coach and director of intramurals.

Their eldest daughter, Hannah Heinzekehr, is a graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) University and is now a church relations associate for Mennonite Mission Network in Claremont, Calif., where she is also in graduate school. Their second daughter, Mayeken, will graduate in December from Bethel College in North Newton, Kan. Elias is a sophomore at EMU. Every family member graduated from Bethany and collectively they have attended four of the five colleges/universities affiliated with Mennonite Church USA.

Heinzekehr believes it is no accident that her family is committed to the church, given the amount of Anabaptist formation they've experienced. "I had incredible mentors, including my parents, who called me to think about using gifts in church and to see how those gifts are valued by God and by others."



Laurie Oswald Robinson is a freelance writer in Newton, Kan.

Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

Training pastors for the church

Four pastors share their experiences in pastoral training. ▶

A class at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. Photo by Jon Styer

While a pastor can pastor without a degree, most people would agree that pastoral training is beneficial. So what difference does it make? Does the experience benefit only the pastor, or does it also benefit the church? Four pastors share about the impact of their pastoral training.

Opportunity to learn close to home

by Haroldo Nunes

I am enrolled in the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH) program, a program that combines distance education with face-to-face instruction. Before SeBAH, many of my Hispanic brothers and sisters didn't have the option to continue with higher education due to the financial cost or because they couldn't leave their jobs to move closer to a university. The convenience of not having to leave my secular work and my ministry has made it possible for me to participate in this undergrad program.

I learned so much during the initial intensive workshop I attended with other students. "Comprendiendo la Biblia," my current course on the Bible and its exegesis, is taught by Ron Collins via e-mail. SeBAH has already made an impact on my spiritual life. My mind has been opened to a more comprehensive understanding of the biblical text, which I can then share with my congregation.

I hope many more will be able to access these courses to help grow their ministries. We need to promote this program strongly and get ongoing funding.

Once I complete eight courses, two workshops and a final project, I will earn a certificate in pastoral ministry.

Haroldo Nunes is pastor of Open Arms Hispanic Ministry at Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster, Ohio.

This rootedness made my seminary education more than simply acquiring the technical skills that ministry demands.
—Brad Roth

A tree bearing fruit

by Brad Roth

Psalm 1 proclaims that the disciple of God is like "a tree planted by streams of water." I feel a little like that tree; Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) trained my roots to find water and pruned my branches to grow in fruit-bearing ways.

Before entering seminary, I had sensed the first inklings of a call, but I didn't know the shape of that call—what it might entail or require of me. Through a deeper reading of the Scriptures, through study of history and theology, through the simple community of friends on a similar journey, I sank my roots into the deep, living water of God's Spirit.

This rootedness has helped me minister among God's precious people, to be with them, through the challenging dry times as well as the celebrations. It is this rootedness that made my seminary education more than simply acquiring the technical skills that ministry demands.

Nevertheless, those technical skills are essential—the preaching, the counseling and the exercising of the priestly office in the ritual life of the church. This is where AMBS pruned me to think like a pastor. Seminary education helped me grow so that I could bear some fruit.

Most of the time, I haven't felt like the mighty cedar of Psalm 1—maybe more like a tumbleweed or a dandelion. But I minister in the confidence that God takes pleasure in all things he has rooted and made to grow.

My congregation, Warden Mennonite Church, is a small-town congregation that ministers in a diverse community. Some 75 to 80 percent of the town is Hispanic, primarily of Mexican descent. We have worked to engage our town in many creative ways over the years, but ministry to children has proven central and abiding. We run an afterschool program for kids and participate in a community Vacation Bible School.

Brad Roth, pastor at Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church, received a Master of Divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 2006.

Grateful for foundations

by Beth Jarrett

The intersection of life, learning and faith is an important component of who I am as a pastor. Daily I return to the foundation that was laid by my thoughtful and challenging professors.

As a pastor, I am faced with a barrage of pastoral tasks, theological challenges and congregational needs that test the preparation I received during seminary. I don't always know the answers, but I often know where and how to find the resources needed.

My classes at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) were informative, necessary and useful. I especially appreciated the "Christian Tradition" class in which I was exposed to the rich expression of worship and movement of God throughout the history of the church.

I also valued finding my wings as a preacher in preaching class. Not only was I given the tools I needed to prepare and exegete a text, but I was also given a lab in which I could take flight. My professor and fellow students encouraged the good and refined the rough edges in the safety of a classroom.

EMS was also successful at introducing me to a rhythm and rule for life. I was encouraged to cultivate intentionally a spiritual rhythm in which I tended to my own needs and areas of personal growth as a pastor. Times of worship and reflection were incorporated in our studies each week, and spiritual directors were available.

My sense of preparedness, however, comes from more than just sitting in hours of classes. It comes from countless hours of conversations with professors who cared enough to listen, mentor and guide my pastoral formation process. It comes from the rich debates that unfolded over lunches and coffee breaks. These are the things for which I daily breathe a prayer of thanksgiving in my sanctuary of books, half-written sermons and e-mail.

Beth Jarrett, pastor at Neffsville Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., received a Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., in 2006.

Acquiring identity, knowledge and skills

by Karen Dalke

When I received word in the summer of 2007 that I had been accepted into the Hesston (Kan.) College Pastoral Ministries Program, I was exhilarated. But as the first day of class approached, I found that my emotions were turning to dread and panic. What made me think I could go back to college after a 32-year absence? So many things had surely changed after that many years.

Changed they had. But with the amazing, dedicated staff and faculty at Hesston, I succeeded.

The pastoral leadership training I received was invaluable, and I daily apply those skills in my ministry at Des Moines Mennonite Church. Hesston's unique, threefold approach of addressing identity, knowledge and skills prepared me for congregational leadership and ministry.

I found my identity as a pastor through sharing with other students my perceptions, strengths and weaknesses and how they would ultimately play into my ministering roles. Weekly formation seminars let me gather with the other pastoral ministries students and their spouses to discuss our individual faith journeys, our faith journeys as married couples, and our calling into ministry.

We were also required to be in a mentoring relationship with one of the Bible professors. This was a wonderful opportunity to glean information from an experienced pastor outside the classroom. And what a privilege to sit in prayer with one of my instructors!

The program is academically challenging and well-rounded, building the knowledge pastors need. From learning proper exegetical study of a passage to conflict management classes to visiting churches of different faith denominations, the program exposed me to as much as possible.

The program also prepared me through practical ministry experiences—clinical pastoral education at a local hospital and supervised ministry working in a church setting alongside the pastor.

The Pastoral Ministries Program enriched my life in so many ways, and it is an experience for which I am extremely grateful.

Karen Dalke, pastor of Des Moines (Iowa) Mennonite Church, graduated from the Hesston (Kan.) College Pastoral Ministries Program in 2009.

I found my identity as a pastor through sharing with other students my perceptions, strengths and weaknesses and how they would ultimately play into my ministering roles.—Karen Dalke

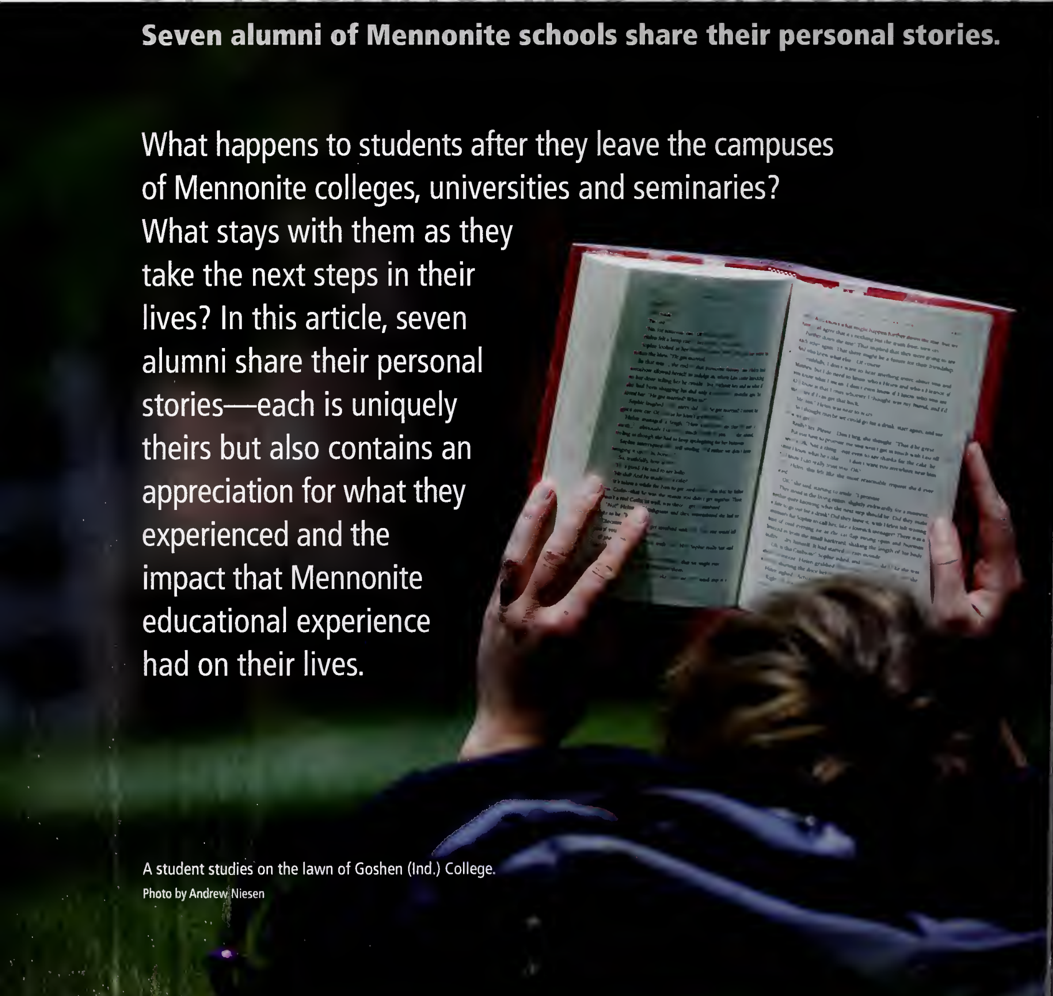
Mennonite Education changed my LIFE!

A special section on Mennonite education

The legacy of Mennonite education

Seven alumni of Mennonite schools share their personal stories.

What happens to students after they leave the campuses of Mennonite colleges, universities and seminaries? What stays with them as they take the next steps in their lives? In this article, seven alumni share their personal stories—each is uniquely theirs but also contains an appreciation for what they experienced and the impact that Mennonite educational experience had on their lives.



A student studies on the lawn of Goshen (Ind.) College.
Photo by Andrew Niesen

Window to opportunity

by Melanie Zuercher

Daniel Hege came to Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., with "a passion for music, but it wasn't channeled." So at Bethel, he tested that passion from a variety of angles.

He played trombone in the jazz ensembles and tuba in the wind ensemble, then heard and fell in love with the sound of the oboe and began studying that instrument. He sang in the Bethel College Concert Choir, formed a madrigal group and performed in Bethel music theater.

About halfway through his time at Bethel, Hege says, he began hearing about a professor "whose classes were not to be missed." So Hege began developing his love of history in Keith Sprunger's classes, beginning to see, he says, "how history and music were related and that my whole life I had been thinking like a historian." He ended up with a double major in music and history.

Hege's "musical epiphany" came, he says, in his junior year, when one day Walter Jost, Concert Choir director, asked Hege to direct a rehearsal in Jost's absence. As a result of that experience, Hege says, "I became curious about conducting.

"You have to enjoy the process of taking the music apart and putting it back together," he continued. "It takes a lot of study. It involves coaching. It means knowing the music 100 percent and being able to gauge people's [players and audience] reaction to it. It's not just beating time."

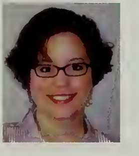
Recalling his Bethel years, Hege, currently conductor and music director of the Syracuse (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra and the Wichita (Kan.) Symphony Orchestra, says, "I had opportunities I would maybe not have had at a larger school. It enabled me to go out and do it myself, gave me confidence and helped me think: 'I can do this.'

"Bethel had great [musical] training for me and allowed me to be involved in many things. It led me to a window where I was able to look out and see what was possible."

Daniel Hege is a 1987 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., who lives in Jamesville, N.Y. Melanie Zuercher, Bethel College institutional communications writer, wrote this article.

Learning and faith intertwined

by Amy Nissley



My first taste of Mennonite education came at Iowa Mennonite School (IMS) in Kalona, Iowa, where I completed grades 9-12. In that setting I discovered the beauty of combining learning with matters of faith. This was a refreshing change from my early school experiences, where those types of conversations did not happen within the school walls. The teachers at IMS were committed to providing a safe environment for students to question and interact with life and faith. My time at IMS laid a strong foundation on which my other educational experiences were built.

> I was challenged to view the various learning situations through the lens of spiritual development. Tending my spiritual life was as important as tending my studies.—Amy Nissley

I am grateful for the stellar education I received at the University of Iowa, yet during my course of study there, I missed the interaction of learning and faith in the classroom. It was refreshing when I began studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., where these two elements of life could once again be intertwined. I appreciated the interactions I had with other students in and out of the classroom setting, where this weaving together could continue.

The course of study at AMBS was not narrow in focus. It called me to engage in learning while including expressions of faith. Learning in that setting became multifaceted. I was challenged to view the various learning situations through the lens of spiritual development. Tending my spiritual life was as important as tending my studies.

Amy Nissley, a 2004 graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., lives in Mountain Lake, Minn., where she serves as associate pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church.

A lasting impression

by Jenna Liechty Martin

During my time at Bluffton (Ohio) University, I joined Camerata Singers on a choir tour through Europe, where we sang, connected with local Mennonite churches and heard stories of peace and conflict transformation. During our time in Paris, we met two long-term Mennonite workers who shared their story and subsequently left an impression on my life. Recently, as I was cleaning out old boxes of college papers and journals, I came across my reflections on the time spent in Paris: "Perhaps I will find myself doing similar work someday."

I was challenged to consider what a commitment to Jesus and to the church means for my life.
—Jenna Liechty Martin

My experience at Bluffton has left a deep impression on my life, one that I am continuing to discover as I find my way in the world. While experiences like the one above were significant, as was a semester-long program in Northern Ireland, there were also more mundane and routine encounters on the Bluffton campus that clearly have shaped me and led me to where I am today. In and out of the classroom, I was challenged to consider what a commitment to Jesus and to the church means for my life. These conversations did not take place solely in the context of religion courses but permeated discussion in business, science and writing classes. Mennonite higher education provided the backdrop for which pertinent questions to life could be wrestled with and lived out within community. Relationships with classmates and professors played an important role in my experience as they helped guide, encourage and discern with me along the way.

Today, along with my husband, I am living and serving with Mennonite Mission Network in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where we are working with a reconciliation program. As I continue to wrestle with the questions of faith and life, I value and am grateful for the four years of discovery and learning that took place at Bluffton.

Jenna Liechty Martin, a 2007 Bluffton (Ohio) University graduate, lives in Northern Ireland.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., food packaging event for Haiti
Photo by Vada Snider

A soldier taught to think

by Ike Porter

When I first arrived at Eastern Mennonite College (now EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., I felt like a fish out of water. I had been discharged from the military at the conclusion of an unpopular war. I was a warrior entering a faith community that did not believe in war. I genuinely wanted peace and wholeness for my soul but was unable to articulate such a profound concept. I had not been raised in a Christian tradition but had a conversion while in the military.

Many religious-based schools do not teach students how to think but what to think.—Ike Porter

EMU taught me how to think. This is a simple yet profound statement. Many religious-based educational institutions do not teach students how to think; instead they teach them what to think. I remember many times being confused about an issue I was studying only to have the professor encourage me to work through it. I wanted answers; my professors wanted me to think.

Today, I serve as the chief chaplain at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Battle Creek, Mich. My work in anger management and as a federal mediator grows out of the theology of peace and reconciliation I learned and embraced at EMU. My work in ethics is enhanced by my formal education, but it is driven mostly by living with, taking communion with and becoming one with a people who are willing to pay a price for standing up for what is right.

God has taken what I learned and experienced in the military and combined it with what I learned at EMU, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Ashland Theological Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Western Theological Seminary. This has enabled me to be a minister of hope and reconciliation in a realm where many are devastated and wounded physically, emotionally and spiritually by the worst that humanity can do to humanity.

Ike Porter, a 1979 graduate of Eastern Mennonite College (now Eastern Mennonite University) in Harrisonburg, Va., lives in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Anabaptist tradition deepens faith

by Marvin Lorenzana

My years at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., were probably the most intense, formative years of my life. As a Pentecostal minister for almost 15 years before coming to EMS, I experienced firsthand the perils and excitement of real-life ministry. I had been in the trenches long enough to know what to expect. Nonetheless, I always felt that my "doing" ministry desperately needed an overhaul. It soon became clear to me that just my good intentions of supporting people in the pew might not be enough to succeed in ministry long term.

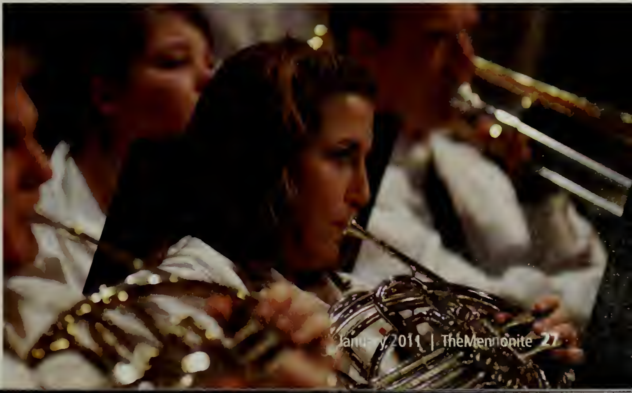
Many times I felt overwhelmed by a sense of dissatisfaction about my task as a preacher, teacher of the Bible and counselor. The reason for such feelings of frustration and inadequacy probably came from a shallow theological understanding of Christian faith. I knew my Christian ministry needed to be rooted in a sound theological Christian tradition, and that's when my journey to EMS started.

EMS gave me a wonderful opportunity to learn about and experience the Anabaptist tradition of Christian faith. Rooting my Christian faith and experience on this tradition has given more substance and depth to my ministry. Today, I credit my seminary experience for fostering in me the need to reflect theologically about life, God, faith and Christian ministry. EMS nurtured in me a profound need to assign the highest importance to Scripture so that devotional reading, in time, has become a light that has guided my path in life. I also learned about the importance of following Christ as a disciple.

Finally, I became familiar with the concept of service as a superior way of being a Christian in the world and learned the importance of discerning God's will in the midst of a community of believers. I have applied what I learned at EMS in my work as director of Eastern Mennonite University's multicultural student services office.

Marvin Lorenzana, a 2008 graduate of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

Concert band at Bluffton (Ohio) University. Photo by Burton Andrews



Living out one's beliefs

by Tim Manickam

I was delivered into this world by a Mennonite doctor but had to wait 18 years to learn who the Mennonites really were. More than 30 years later I continue to learn.

Growing up as a son of Indian missionaries in Thailand, I was raised in an ecumenical Christian community—Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists. But Mennonites were not in that mix.

> You can teach someone all you want about faith, religion, philosophy, politics and life skills, but it is the people living out those beliefs that create the greatest impact.—Tim Manickam

Spending four years at Goshen (Ind.) College, living in a Mennonite community, was eye-opening and life-changing for me. The college years are usually when a young person develops critical thinking skills, making the choice of the institution a crucial part of the equation. During class discussions or campus debates of important life issues, I was often struck by the "new" Anabaptist perspectives. Whether it was in biology class or through inductive studies of the Old Testament prophets, I added new dimensions to my faith that could only come from being in that environment.

While academics are primary in higher education, the social aspect can sometimes provide an even greater opportunity for learning. You can teach someone all you want about faith, religion, philosophy, politics and life skills, but it is the people living out those beliefs that create the greatest impact. This was certainly true for me, someone coming from a non-Mennonite heritage. I could have read all the books in the world on being a Christian, following Jesus, living a life of service or being a peacemaker. But it would not have been nearly as powerful as spending those four years at Goshen, learning from those professors, being in their homes and seeing for myself the meaning of living a Christian life as a Mennonite.

What does that mean for me today? Although I live 2,500 miles away from Indiana in a clearly "unchurched" part of the country, I can't escape the influence of those four significant years of my life.

Tim Manickam, a 1982 Goshen (Ind.) College graduate, lives in Portland, Ore.

A chemistry class at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Photo by Lindsey Grosh

Community of faith

by Terry Shue

Mennonite higher education has been a part of my life from the beginning, well before I was even around.

I come from a family that has a connection to Hesston (Kan.) College that is much more than an educational degree to build upon. My mother and 12 of her 13 siblings, my siblings, my wife and our three children share the formative experience of a Mennonite educational lens for two years at Hesston. While this foundation was laid to go "everywhere," as Hesston says, there were learnings I took away from that experience that were not part of the graded curriculum or objectives.

My experiences at Hesston, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and later Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., have been my way to connect not only to education but to the larger Mennonite church community. Traveling with choir tours and other small groups, I discovered and created a network of people that continues to be part of my broader world even today. Cities, towns, families, pastors and congregations all had a reference point through relationships in these formative years. I experienced faculty, staff and students with a concern for justice in our world—people really striving to live as a community of faith.

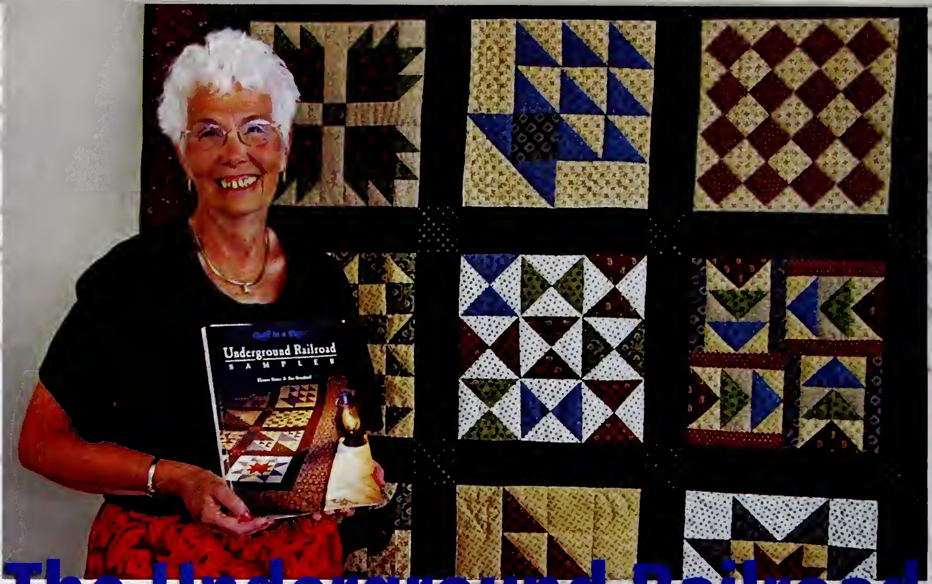
In these schools, the faculty and staff were concerned for me as a person while intending to stretch me. As a community of learners, we learned to look beyond the polarized voices around us to seek to understand the complexities of our world as followers of Jesus. Whether in the sciences or the humanities, I experienced both competency and character of the faculty and staff who have shaped my life and for which I am thankful.

I experienced faculty, staff and students with a concern for justice in our world—people really striving to live as a community of faith.—Terry Shue

Through my experience in Mennonite education, I grew to understand the faith of my community. And it was primarily through the Mennonite educational setting that I owned this faith and value system as my own.

Terry Shue, a 1977 Hesston (Kan.) College graduate, lives in Kidron, Ohio.

A commissioning service in the Pastoral Ministries Program at Hesston (Kan.) College.
Photo provided



The Underground Railroad story in quilts

by Dorothy Logan

Dorothy Logan in front of her quilt, holding the book *The Underground Railroad Sampler*

Retired educator and quilter Ozella McDaniel Williams from Charleston, S.C., shared the secret codes embedded in quilts to assist runaway slaves on their escape north. The code had been passed down as oral history in her family from the time of the Underground Railroad, 1830 to the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, to 1994. The story of the encounter of Williams and journalist Jacqueline L. Tobin is recorded in *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and The Underground Railroad* by Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard.

Several years later, quilter Eleanor Burns and Sue Bouchard became fascinated with Williams' story and created a sampler quilt based on the secret code, publishing the patterns in the book *The Underground Railroad Sampler*.

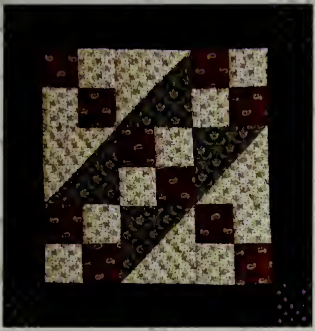
As a member of the Mennonite church, I find comfort in knowing there is no historical evidence that members of our church were ever slaveholders, and I am grateful for the compassion for slaves I inherited from my faith community. *The Underground Railroad Sampler* provided a means for me to transform my stitches into prayers for action—that injustice today might be brought to justice, bondage to freedom and disrespect to respect. I also sought to honor with my stitches the ingenuity of women like Ozella McDaniel Williams, Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks, whose actions as agents of determination and change brought into being the admonition of the Prophet Micah: "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8b).

The three women I honor in this story quilt—Williams, Tubman, Parks—carried the meaning, comfort and strength of inheritance embedded in quilts in their bones. Parks, in recalling the events of Dec. 1, 1955, years later, remembered: "When that white driver stepped back toward us, when he waved his hand and ordered us up and out of our seats, I felt a determination cover my body like a quilt on a winter night."

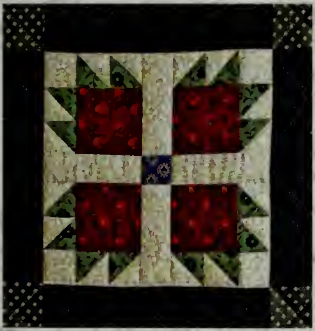
My hope and prayer is that viewers of this story quilt will not only recognize the injustice of the past visited on people of color but will also look to the present. Insurmountable needs in our world today are waiting for agents of change from injustice to justice, bondage to freedom, disrespect to respect. What does the Lord require of us?

Dorothy Logan is a member of Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

A story quilt honors Ozella McDaniel Williams, Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks.

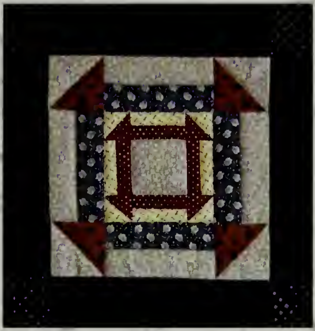


Underground Railroad: A symbolic railroad track and "runaway train" carried its passengers, runaway slaves, to stops at safe houses designated as stations. Those guiding the runaways were called conductors. (Harriet Tubman returned home to aid countless other fugitives after having arrived to freedom herself.)

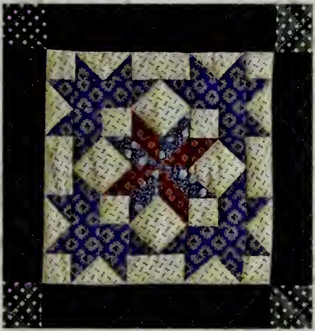


Bear's Paw: Follow bears' trails over the Appalachian mountain range, certain routes through the mountains leading to sources of water filled with fish for sustenance.

wikimedia.org | Harriet Tubman, 1895

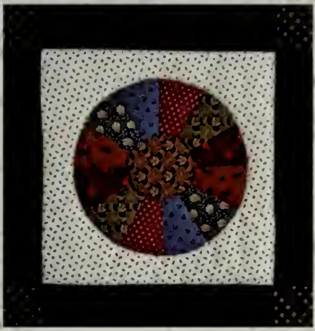


Monkey Wrench: A signal to gather tools in preparation for the escape. Wrenches would be needed to maintain the wagons during the long journeys of escape. The smaller design in the middle of the block commemorates the keen mental skills essential for the escape.

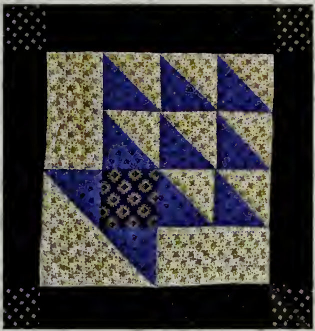


Carpenter's Wheel: A reminder of faith. Slaves who embraced spirituality and faith in heaven carried music in their bones, singing as they worked to create rhythm to sustain them, e.g., "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot Comin' to Carry me Home." Note the inner star, linked to the outer incomplete stars.

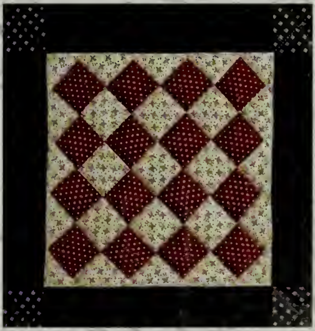
Crossroads: In northern cities, look for the crossroads of various trails intersecting close to water passages leading to Canada.

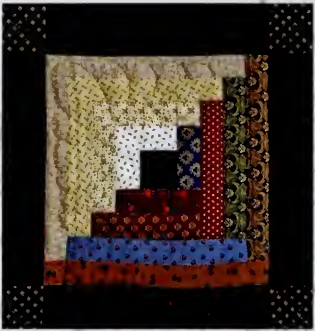


Wagon Wheel, also known as Dresden Plate: This part of the code suggested the time had come to pack essential supplies in hidden places in the wagon.

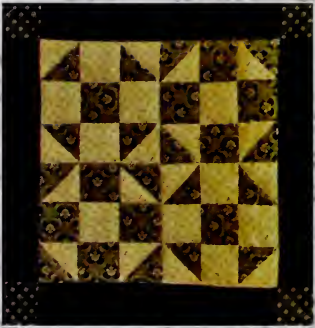


Basket: Pack as many provisions as possible. But it was impossible to pack enough for the long journey by foot, and abolitionists at safe houses along the way replenished food and clothing.

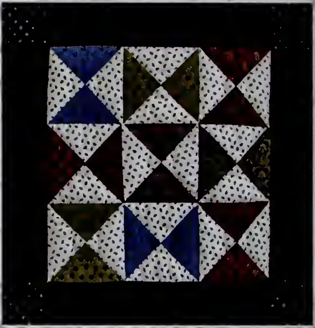




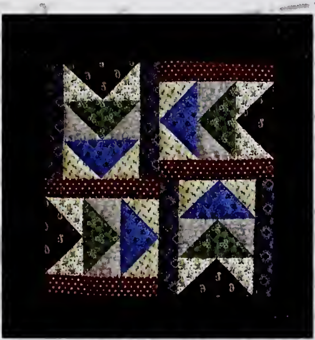
Log Cabin: A cabin of shelter or a safe home. A black center small piece of fabric in the middle of the block signaled a safe house and a reprieve from traveling.



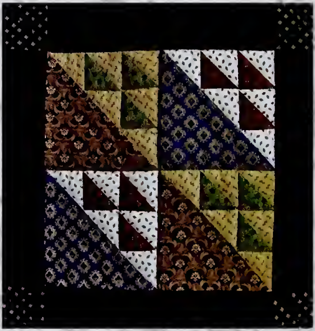
Shoo-Fly: A code name for abolitionists aiding slaves in securing hiding places for the day or night.



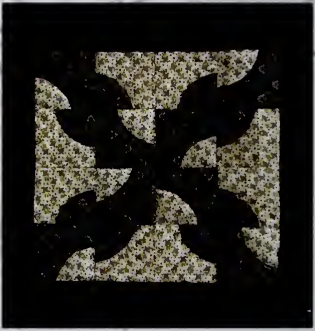
Bow Tie: Runaway slaves were supplied with new clothes so they would look like the free blacks who lived in the North.



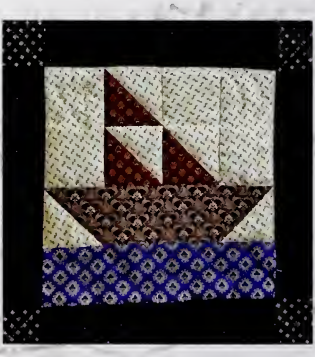
Flying Geese: Geese fly north in the springtime; their flight path told travelers which direction they were heading. Also, the descent of geese could indicate a source of water.



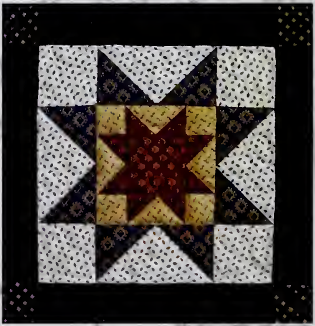
Birds of the Air: When springtime arrives, runaways would find a favorable climate to begin their escape to the north.



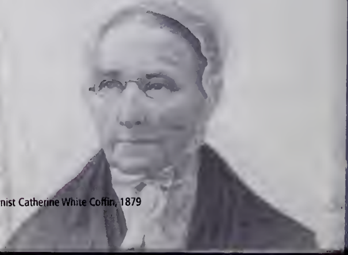
Drunkard's Path: Follow an irregular, staggering path to avoid and confuse slave catchers from the south hunting for runaways with tracking dogs.



Sail Boat: The last step of the journey to freedom. Arrival at Canada's borders.



North Star: The North Star was revered by all slaves who relied on its unfailing direction and presence during nighttime travel. The North Star also served as a guiding light to boat owners who transported hidden slaves in waterways to Canada. The border, designed by the quiltmaker, depicts the many barriers surrounding the runaway slaves as they sought to follow well-planned routes in their quest for escape.



wikimedia.org | Abolitionist Catherine White Coffin, 1879

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Preparing students for life, vocation and service to the church

As president, I welcome you to read the pages of this Bluffton insert, which shares stories of how our educational community prepares students for life and vocation, and for service to the church.

Along with our sister colleges, universities and seminaries within Mennonite Church USA, Bluffton's history, contributions and commitments to the church are strong and deep. Bluffton was founded by Mennonites in 1899 on the banks of the Little Riley Creek in northwest Ohio. For 111 years this beautifully-wooded campus has provided the setting in which generations of students have been nurtured in faith and have set life's directions.

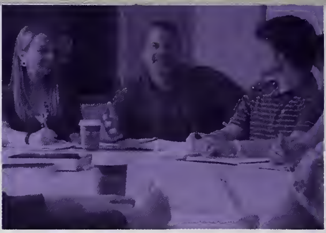
Commitment to academic quality. Bluffton receives external recognition for the overall quality of its educational experience and academic programs offered to our more than 1,000 undergraduate students and 120 master's degree students (including selection this year for *U.S. News and World Reports*' listing of "great schools at great prices"). Undergraduates can choose from liberal arts, pre-professional and professional programs and from among 34 academic majors and 37 minors. Bluffton's programs in social work, music, dietetics, and teacher education have earned additional specialty accreditation at the national level. Students in our newest undergraduate major—public health—will begin their study this coming fall.

Commitment to values that matter. Bluffton's institutional purposes include explicit commitments to educating for Christian values that are at the core of Anabaptist/Mennonite convictions—including values of personal faith development and expressions of outreach, service and peacemaking. Such values are infused throughout the curriculum, Bluffton's active religious life program and in many different ways by Bluffton faculty and residence life staff. All traditional students share common first-year seminar and senior-year "Christian Values in the Global Community" capstone course experiences. Bluffton students are required to include at least two Bible and religion classes in their courses of study, and more than 90 percent of Bluffton graduates participate in month or semester-long off-campus cross-cultural experiences, often in developing country settings abroad. Annually, a campus-wide civic engagement theme focuses a wide variety of campus events and special activities on a topic of particular social importance—this year, "Living with Enough: Responding to Global Poverty."

Commitment to resourcing the church. Bluffton is in partnership with the wider church—in striving to educate and train its future members and leaders, to inspire its future service workers and pastors, and in sharing university resources with the wider church in ways that help develop and strengthen the denomination. Ongoing activities include Bluffton partnering with a growing number of Mennonite high schools in offering dual enrollment courses (that offer college credit) on their campuses. Mediation training for Bluffton students and others is made available. Bluffton's Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center and its unique collection of peace-themed children's literature serves both our teacher education students and patrons from church communities. In recent years Bluffton has partnered with area conferences and other Mennonite organizations in hosting conferences on youth leadership, youth pastoring, immigration issues, women in ministry, Mennonite writing, and on the legacy of Pilgram Marpeck, an early Anabaptist leader.

Thank you for your support for Mennonite education that nurtures students and builds and serves the church.

James M. Harder
President



BLUFFTON
BLUF
ASEBAL

Youth ministry Q&A with Rev. Dr. Randy Keeler, associate professor of religion

1. Can you outline the history of Bluffton's program, and your involvement in it, for training students who are prospective youth pastors?

Around 1995-96, the religion department started a youth ministry minor, hoping to capitalize on my extensive youth ministry background to get more students into the department. At that time, we were graduating only a few students a year in the religion major. By 1997-98, a youth ministries and recreation major was approved by the faculty, and we graduated 10 students in our first class, in 2000. When we revised the religion major to include concentrations—around 2006—we included youth ministry as a concentration, so now there were two ways for a student to major in youth ministry. Currently, we encourage students who anticipate being youth pastors in congregations to take the religion major with the youth ministry concentration, and all others who hope to do youth ministry in a number of settings, particularly para-church settings, to major in youth ministries and recreation. Since its inception, the youth ministry program has graduated well over 50 students.

2. What is the nature of the training that Bluffton offers these students?

All majors have a number of courses in practical theology to prepare them for the vocation of youth ministry. Courses include the study of ministry, spirituality, Christian education, discipleship and, of course, youth ministry. Bible and theology are also an integral component of the major with all students—regardless of denominational background—required to take a course to expose them to Anabaptist-Mennonite distinctives. Each student also is required to complete a practicum or internship experience. I also strongly encourage our students to minister in some form over the summers and to get involved in ministry leadership on campus in the religious life program.

3. You have also hosted youth pastors on campus each fall for the last three years. How did this come about, and what training activities have you led on these days?

A few years ago, I was asked by one of our former religion department students, who is now a youth pastor, to host Mennonite youth pastors from the Ohio region for a one-day training event and mutual resourcing. We have done that now for three years, and the topics have been those relevant for youth pastors and have served as a way for me to connect with youth ministry professionals.

4. What do you hope the youth pastors have taken away from these training sessions?

My hope is that the youth pastors have felt resourced for their work and have had an opportunity to be updated on current cultural and ministry trends. The interaction with each other has also proven invaluable as they have made ministry connections with those involved in similar work as themselves.

5. You will be leading three sessions at Mennonite Church USA's biennial conference in Pittsburgh next July. What will you be presenting, and how much of it is directed toward youth pastors?

My three sessions this summer include one for youth and two for youth sponsors. The one for youth is titled "Doing It God's Way Without Going Crazy," which looks at a way to think about God's will for their lives and how they might join in with what God is doing in the world. The other two seminars are specifically for youth pastors and sponsors and are titled "Spiritual Disciplines for Anabaptist Youth Workers" and "It's All About Relationships...Bridging the Chasm Proactively." The seminars grow out of some of the work and thinking I've been doing recently, both in reflecting on my own youth ministry experience and also as I've heard struggles from youth workers and areas where they could use some help and direction.

Tackling pre-med

As a student at Goshen, Ind., High School, Thomas Gingrich talked to a number of colleges about the possibility of playing football. But most of the places where he applied for admission were Mennonite institutions. "That and football led me here," said Gingrich, now a sophomore at Bluffton University.

"All my family's had good experiences at Mennonite colleges," he said, noting that a couple of his cousins had also attended Bluffton. When he visited the university, "I liked the small campus feel, and I liked the coaches, too, so it just seemed to fit."

A member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen, Gingrich came to Bluffton undecided about what he would study. At the end of his freshman year, however, he declared a major in biology/pre-medicine. "I've always liked sciences and done pretty well in them, so it seemed like a good option to me," he explained, adding that while he's unsure about his future plans, sports medicine is a possibility.

That would be in keeping with Gingrich's recent experience as a football player. He started every game for Bluffton as a freshman offensive tackle, but his sophomore season was limited to three games by a right-knee injury that required arthroscopic surgery in November to remove floating and torn cartilage. That was "a little bit frustrating," he said, but he plans to return to the field next fall.

While his football season was cut short, his work in the classroom earned Gingrich recognition as a Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference All-Academic selection.

Alum with MMN in Northern Ireland looks back at Bluffton

During my time at Bluffton University, I joined Camerata Singers on a choir tour through Europe, where we sang, connected with local Mennonite churches and heard stories of peace and conflict transformation. During our time in Paris, we met two long-term Mennonite workers who shared their story and subsequently left an impression on my life. Recently, as I was cleaning out old boxes of college papers and journals, I came across my reflections on the time spent in Paris: "Perhaps I will find myself doing similar work someday. …"

My experience at Bluffton has left a deep impression on my life, one that I am continuing to discover as I find my way in the world. In and out of the classroom, I was challenged to consider what a commitment to Jesus and to the church means for my life. These conversations did not take place solely in the context of religion courses, but permeated discussion in business, science and writing classes. Mennonite higher education provided the backdrop for which pertinent questions to life could be wrestled with and lived out within community.

Today, along with my husband Peter Martin, I am living and serving with Mennonite Mission Network in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where we are working with a reconciliation program. As I continue to wrestle with the questions of faith and life, I value and am grateful for the four years of discovery and learning that took place at Bluffton.

Jenna Liechty Martin '07

Financial Aid at Bluffton University

Bluffton University is expanding its already extensive grant and scholarship offerings by doubling the Mennonite Student Grant and adding a Music Ensemble Scholarship for non-music majors.

The Mennonite Student Grant, awarded to new students who are members of a Mennonite Church USA congregation, is increasing from $1,000 to $2,000 per year—renewable for four years—effective with the 2011-12 academic year.

At the same time, the Music Ensemble Scholarship will be awarded for the first time, to new students interested in joining a Bluffton musical ensemble, and on the basis of an audition with music faculty. Audition dates for 2011-12 scholarships are Jan. 21, Feb. 10 and Feb. 25. Also renewable for four years, the scholarship amount will range up to $1,000.

As an institution affiliated with Mennonite Church USA, Bluffton is dedicated to educating students from Mennonite congregations and wants those students and their families "to take a serious look" at what the university has to offer, said Lawrence Matthews, financial aid director. "We want them to know that we offer a quality education at a reasonable cost," he added.

The Mennonite Student Grant, which was first offered in 2009-10, is "one more resource of financial support, along with all of our other programs," Matthews said. One of those programs, he pointed out, is a Church Matching Scholarship, which matches dollars provided by any Christian church congregation to a student member attending Bluffton. And most Mennonite churches that have members attending the university contribute scholarship money to those students, he said.

"These things all add up," Matthews said, and "if a family still comes up short in terms of affordability, the need-based programs add on." Among those is the Bluffton Opportunity Grant, the amount of which varies, based upon need as demonstrated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

One of the myths about higher education is that private colleges and universities are always more costly than public institutions, Matthews said. "What we want families to do is check us out and, in some cases, we're probably less expensive, with our financial aid," he said.

Prospective students can see what Bluffton scholarships they qualify for by entering their high school GPA and standardized test scores into an online scholarship calculator, at www.bluffton.edu/admission/financialaid/calculator.

For more information visit:
www.bluffton.edu/admission/financialaid/

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Bluffton's mission...to prepare all students for life, vocation, responsible citizenship and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom.

Bluffton faculty, staff and students aspire to carry out this mission through discovery, community, respect and service – including service to the church.

1 University Drive, Bluffton, Ohio 45817
www.bluffton.edu • 419.358.3000

A partner with:

Mennonite Education Agency

The education agency of Mennonite Church USA

Lifehurts

Suffering can serve to teach us.

by Tammy Darling

All who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted—2 Timothy 3:12

Life hurts. There will be suffering. There will be pain. But there's more to the story. We can rejoice even when we are suffering because everything we go through will make us more like Christ. Good will come from it in time (see Romans 8:28).

Any suffering—death, divorce, sickness, pain—can be used by God to make us spiritually richer. Even our most traumatic experiences can be turned into gains. Joyce Meyer, Christian author and speaker, frequently mentions her past—of being sexually abused by her father for many years. God, however, turned evil into good. God turned that suffering into gain for his glory.

What we gain in suffering can be used to help others who may be going through something similar or struggling with the idea of a God who would allow suffering in the first place. Our suffering can not only bring good to ourselves but to others.

I once read that we respond to trials in one of two ways: bitter or better. The only difference is one letter—the I that refers to me (bitter) or the E that stands for Emmanuel (better).

To allow good to come from our suffering, we must first genuinely believe that good can come from hardship. Instead of wallowing in the loss, pain or sorrow, we can rise above it by thanking God for the good that will come from it in time.

Although we rarely recognize it, God is working in us in the midst of our suffering. "The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10).

When Job was suffering, he had many questions. When God gave him fresh revelation, Job responded with, "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees you" (Job 42:5). Suddenly Job knew all would be well—his "whys" turned to "Who."

It is important that we learn to abide in Christ at all times—even when we are suffering. When I had my first miscarriage, I ran from God. I was angry and full of grief. The only words I spoke to him were angry accusations: "Why didn't you prevent this. You could have, you know?"

Five months later, I suffered a second miscarriage. This time I chose to run to God. It made all the difference. Even though I still had questions, the answers weren't quite so important. As I sat on the edge of my bed weeping, I felt the Lord beside me, weeping right along with me. I was sharing in his sufferings, and it was then I realized how important it is to abide in Christ at all times.

Jesus "endured the cross" because of "the joy that was set before him" (see Hebrews 12:1-3). He knew the suffering he would face, but he also knew the good that would come from it. He chose to focus on the good instead of the suffering.

We have the same choice. Anytime we suffer, we can focus on the suffering, saying, "Why, Lord?" or we can focus on the ultimate good that will come from the suffering.

Sometimes our greatest revelations come when suffering is the deepest. My greatest, concentrated spiritual growth came after my second miscarriage. By the time I had my third miscarriage, I had matured to the point where it wasn't nearly as painful or sorrowful as the previous two. This time I was able to immediately receive the Lord's comfort and ask what he wanted to do in and through me because of it.

We can rejoice when we are suffering because we "are sharing Christ's sufferings so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:13).

God has not lost control but is still on the throne. He is always sovereign, always good. He has plans, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). Life hurts, but Jesus makes it better.

Tammy Darling lives in Three Springs, Pa.

> Although we rarely recognize it, God is working in us in the midst of our suffering.

Transforming the world

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

We live in such a polarized world. The recent elections again revealed the polarization in which we live and the context in which our church and institutions minister. There is a better way. We are called to offer hope to a world that seems to have lost it, to bestow love and compassion where there is brokenness and hatred, and to become agents of "healing and hope," to which our denominational vision statement so eloquently calls us.

I recently heard a character on television expressing guilt at his inaction. He described his response as "an ostrich that puts his head in the ground." I wonder how many times that phrase might describe me. It is sometimes easier to look the other way as if that will somehow eliminate the issue or situation. But it never does.

Our world desperately needs more leaders who see Jesus as their model for leading.

As Christian leaders we have a responsibility to respond instead of looking the other way. As Anabaptists, we have something to share with the world in the midst of all the polarization. We need to speak boldly, to help train and prepare leaders to face the present and future world and to respond to the needs around us by taking on leadership roles.

Our church has not escaped the polarization in our culture. Many times I have been asked to take part in arguments between those who favor Mennonite education and those who favor public education. This type of argument creates a false choice; it implies that being in favor of one means that one must be against the other. Instead of using "or" in this discussion, let's use "and" when speaking about education.

It is also important to acknowledge that Mennonite education is distinctive from public education and needs to continue to be distinctive. The church plays an important role in helping shape this distinctiveness, which also enhances the church's ministry, including its missional calling. Mennonite schools, colleges/universities, seminaries and educational programs are actively engaged in helping develop leaders for the church and beyond. Mennonite education offers an alternative to the distorted, polarized worldview—a Christ-centered, servant leadership where God's love is shared regardless of a person's job title.

I have experienced this type of leadership from mentors and role models in the Mennonite church. I have seen it in graduates who are starting their careers with a burning desire to make a difference in the world. I have seen it in faculty and staff who have given their lives (and often have given up more financially prosperous careers) because they believed in the importance of the school's mission. Our world desperately needs more leaders who see Jesus as their model for leading.

Mennonite educational institutions are not the only setting where such leadership development takes place, but they serve an important role in the church in this endeavor. With technology, Mennonite education no longer has to be bound by geography, only by relationships and the ability to communicate effectively. Mennonite education, at all levels, deserves our support and commitment—whether through prayer, advocacy or financial contributions. Mennonite education is a gift for everyone.

This month, as part of a Mennonite Schools Council and Mennonite Education Agency initiative, Mennonite Publishing Network is publishing *Teaching that Transforms: Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters* by John D. Roth, a well-known writer and professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College. Through the book we hope to share widely about the Anabaptist-Mennonite theology that serves as the foundation for the pedagogy, beliefs and practices present in Mennonite educational institutions. According to Roth, the book also provides "a framework for an open, lively, vigorous and honest conversation about the nature of our Christian witness to the world and our assumptions about the future of the church."

I hope this book will be read and discussed by many across our church, especially by those who hold different points of view. I hope people rediscover the role Mennonite education plays in the church's Christian witness to the world while also being inspired anew to become agents of "healing and hope." TM

Church baby

I would like to think I coined the phrase "church baby." It's possible, since I wasn't able to find the reference when googling it. When I was pregnant with my first child, I told people at church that I wanted my daughter to be a "church baby," which means, in the simplest form, she would feel comfortable going to any adult in the church.

This was important to me for two reasons. As one of the pastors of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church and as a wife of an emergency department nurse who at the time worked every other weekend, I needed help on the Sundays I was up front participating in the service. I once tried wearing my daughter in a front pack while leading sharing time, which did not go well. The only thing my daughter wanted to do was grab the microphone. So while the microphone was being passed to another congregant, I took my daughter out of the front pack and handed her to one of the two people who saw me unbuckling and headed to the front to help. I did not have to ask either of them to do this.

I also wanted my daughter and subsequent children to feel at home at church. I wanted them to feel like I did about the church. My family never lived close to the rest of my extended family. In each of the churches we attended, I had people who were, to me, adoptive grandparents, aunts and uncles. These people still have a special place in my heart.

My husband, children and I now live thousands of miles from our extended family. I hope my daughter and son have similar types of relationships. It's hard not being close to our parents, siblings and other close relatives, but we try to remain in close contact with family. We use Skype about once a week with our parents, which is especially important now that they're grandparents.

While technology is great, it's not the same as face-to-face, personal contact. In the age of social networking, relationships with people you can actually touch is decreasing, or at least that's the way it feels, making contact with real live people even more essential. Whether we realize it or not, having friends we see in person on a regular basis is pretty crucial to our development as human beings. That's why I want my children to have people at church they consider their adoptive relatives, as people they can go to besides Mom and Dad, people who love them, want the best for them and can be a part of their growing-up years.

The most important quality for these adoptive relatives is a relationship with Jesus and the church. The purpose of being a church baby is to be surrounded by people who love Jesus and the church, people who, guided by the love of Christ, can be an example of what it's like to be a Christian in a world that is not. I realize that not all blood relatives can fill this role, even when they live right next door. To me, this is just another reason for raising a church baby. Being a church baby is not only for children who don't live close to their grandparents. It's for all children; and, if I can expand the phrase, it is for all people who are in a church community. All of us are better people when surrounded by others who care, love and support us.

> The purpose of being a church baby is to be surrounded by people who love Jesus and the church and who can be an example of what it's like to be a Christian in a world that is not.

Many people come to a church to find a sense of belonging, to be part of a community. People often talk about community, and we have many Mennonite churches with the word community in their title. It's necessary to be in community with people who we can relate to on deep levels, both personally and spiritually. Otherwise, we may find ourselves living in isolation. In a healthy community our lives are enriched, our sense of belonging is strengthened, we have help in times of stress, and our level of happiness is given a boost.

My children are church babies; they have a church community that loves them. A few Sundays ago my daughter was running around after church. As she encountered groups of people talking, a few of them stooped down to talk with her. At the same time, my son was asleep in the arms of another church member. I hope all of us can be so lucky as to call ourselves church babies. TM

Rachel Ringenberg Miller is pastor of community life at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Is the Mennonite church a peace church?

Robert J. Zani is a prisoner and longtime reader of *The Mennonite* in Tennessee Colony, Texas.

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.
—Jeremiah 6:14 and 8:11

German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who understood the subject of peace as well as anyone, wrote: "The followers of Christ have been called to peace. And they must not only have peace but also make it. His disciples keep the peace by choosing to endure suffering themselves rather than inflict it on others. In so doing they overcome evil with good and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate."

Subsequently, John Howard Yoder added that a church is a peace church if it exhibits "a social style characterized by the creation of a new community and the rejection of violence of any kind," which is "the theme of the New Testament proclamation from beginning to end, from the right to the left. The cross of Christ is the model of Christian social efficacy, the power of God for those who believe."

Why not name and take on the entire problem at its root, once and for all?

To look at the question: Is the Mennonite church a peace church? There are two questions to be answered: (1) Precisely how is peace to be defined? (2) What are the facts and evidence? Is peace to be defined as the absence of war? The absence of violence? Tranquility? Silence? Going along to get along? What do the Scriptures say? Let's take a close look.

The greatest of the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah, repeatedly addressed the question What is peace? It is Isaiah who uses the phrase "prince of peace." And he lays it all on the line in chapters 32 and 42. He goes directly after social policy and injustice. Isaiah 32:17 says that justice will bring about peace. To Isaiah, justice equals peace, and peace equals justice. No justice, no peace. No peace, no justice. And there you have it, a succinct, solid biblical definition of peace by the Old Testament peace prophet.

In his editorial of April 2010 ("At Peace with War"), Everett J. Thomas lists five reasons some Mennonites appear to be at peace with war. All true. Underlying each of those listed reasons is one terrifying, hard-core evil. The human face of that evil is shown on page 8 of the June 2010 issue in the short item about Pablo Picasso's famous painting "Guernica," the Nazi bombing of Basque civilians during the Spanish Civil War. There have always been civilian casualties during wars, but Guernica established something different—war specifically on defenseless civilians. Eventually all the major so-called "civilized" nations bought into that, though they say what they can to deny it. What came out of that monstrous evil at Guernica was multiplied thousands of times over with the Nazi bombings of England, the allied bombing of Dresden, and on and on and on. The most evil of genies had been let out of the bottle. It now goes by many names: group punishment, collective punishment, collateral damage and other euphemisms for injustice, murder, massacres and sheer evil. Punishment for punishment's sake. Punishing just to be punishing. Injustice without alloy. The dehumanizing of humanity.

All prison systems deliberately practice collective punishment—Stalin and Hitler simply promoted extreme examples. Gaza today is not an exception; it is the rule. It is a matter of looking carefully and seeing clearly. What Hitler and Stalin perfected is now as common as dirt.

The first order of things is to name the problem. To date, no religious faith has taken on this enormous subject for what it is. Although some, including Mennonites, have done so piecemeal; e.g. Gaza, racial profiling, immigration, criminal injustice dysfunctions, wars, bombings, torture, massacres and more.

It is an enormous subject and cuts to the quick. Collective punishment is in fact motivated by the belief that innocence is irrelevant. But when and where innocence is irrelevant, then nothing is relevant, if you think about it. Everything and everyone has become amoral.

Since the Mennonite church has longstanding credentials as a peace church and has from time to time taken on specific problems of obvious injustice, why not name and take on the entire problem at its root, once and for all? No one else is doing that.

For those who believe in the two kingdoms, and I am one, the apostle Paul was not bashful about telling earthly authorities when they were dead wrong and sticking to his (verbal) guns. See Acts 16:35-40.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Shirk uses her French, Creole to help Haitians

After January 2010 earthquake, many Haitians moved to New York City.

Christopher Michel

Marie Lunsa Dorismond (left) and her son Dylan M. Joseph with Sylvia Shirk at the Haitian Family Support Center on Dec. 1, 2010.

Every Thursday, Sylvia Shirk, Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship pastor, takes the No. 5 train to the end of the line in Flatbush, Brooklyn, and walks three blocks south to the Haitian Family Support Center. It's a long trip, by New York City standards, but a relatively short path to helping those affected by the earthquake that hit Haiti in January 2010.

After the earthquake, many Haitians moved to New York City—home to one of the largest Haitian communities in the United States. The Haitian Family Support Center is a vital link for those still struggling to obtain legal status, work and some semblance of order after the earthquake. HFSC provides a variety of legal and social services, including assistance with immigration status petitions, sponsoring relatives, housing requests and applying for medical and food stamp benefits. Shirk, who speaks Creole and French, has served as a translator at the center since last February. Her part-time work is funded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) East Coast.

HFSC opened just days after the earthquake, as Verel Montauban, pastor of the Haitian First Church of New York, began to realize that his congregation was in crisis. Many members had lost family, and many more took in friends and family who arrived in the weeks and months after the catastrophe. HFSC, which is supported by a coalition of organizations and volunteers, has since served more than 1,000 individuals. Funding is only secured through April, but clients' needs are ongoing.

Eighteen-year-old Genevieve Blain arrived in the United States last spring and still feels like she can feel the earth move. She visited HFSC with her parents to continue work on their applications for deferred action status, which essentially guarantees a stay from deportation while petitioners file for U.S. residency, work or citizenship benefits. Another program grants temporary immigration status but is limited to Haitians who lived in the United States prior to the earthquake. Without legal status, immigrants cannot apply for work permits.

There are many like the Blains, who arrived in the United States on tourist visas or as guardians of U.S. citizen children. Unable to work, they often rely on friends and family for lodging and financial support—a difficulty compounded by the challenges of life in New York City and its small apartments, thin paychecks and $2.25 bus fares.

"Families are frustrated," says Pierre. "People are trying to find work, even something minimum wage, so they can give something to the people they are staying with."

Shirk translates interviews that try to ascertain clients' material and economic losses, but their stories also detail emotional and physical anguish. "There's been more than one time we've been in tears," says Shirk. There are bright spots, too—a mother reunited with her children after years of separation—and stories of strength—a woman talks about life after the quake, when she lived with her neighbors in an empty lot. To scare away potential intruders, they periodically banged on pots and pans.

As Shirk shared stories with her congregation, they sought additional ways to support Haitians in the city. One member paid to ship 95 MCC school kits to HFSC. Others provided notary services, French translations, clothing and money, and sold homemade cupcakes on the street in Manhattan. "So many [from the congregation] jumped on board," says Shirk. The proceeds from the bake sale—over $700—were matched by Everence and went toward paying rent for a family Shirk met at HFSC.

While the majority of MCC's response has gone to relief efforts in Haiti, MCC East Coast has also supported outreach to Haitians in Philadelphia and southern Florida. Shirk's service was supported through the end of 2010, but she and MCC are hopeful that her translation work can continue.

One year after the earthquake, there's just misery after misery, says Shirk. "Unfortunately, the need for funds continues to be very timely."—*Sara Versluis*

Young adults hooked on convention

Captivated by experiences at youth conventions, young adults want to help.

Brent Brockmueller first attended a Mennonite Church USA convention—St. Louis 1999—as a member of his youth group at Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D. By the time the week concluded, he was looking ahead to see how he could be involved in future conventions.

Brent Brockmueller

At Nashville 2001, he participated as a student worker from Hesston (Kan.) College. Since then, Brockmueller has attended four biennial conventions as a community life volunteer, serving as a liaison between youth convention participants and hotel staff members. At Pittsburgh 2011, he will serve as coordinator of community life volunteers.

"Because I had such a positive experience when I was a youth, I wanted to get on board to help make the convention experience the best it can be," says Brockmueller, 30.

Young adults like Brockmueller often point to their participation at youth conventions as one of the most meaningful and memorable church experiences they had growing up. Many church leaders cite convention attendance as a major faith formation piece. Mennonites also see convention as a key Mennonite identity builder.

Sending a young adult delegate to convention to represent your congregation communicates that young adult voices are valued and need to be heard.—Terry Shue

"People claim that our young adults are leaving the church or are not interested in the broader church," says Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning. "But at conventions, we see that there are young adults who want to be involved and to be a part of the broader church family."

However, for many young adults (ages 18-30), attending convention is no small task.

Members of Molly Hostetler's young adult Sunday school class at Emma Mennonite Church in Topeka, Ind., acknowledged their own danger of drifting from the church. So they decided to make attending San José 2007 a priority.

"We as a class recognized that our age group is among those who attend church the least," Hostetler says. "We wanted to do something that would keep us 'in tune' with the rest of the church."

Hostetler's young adult class paid for airline tickets to San José themselves and held fund-raisers in the church to help pay conference and hotel fees.

Swartzendruber Miller says she would like to see congregations send more of their young adults to convention, either as delegates or as participants; congregations who have more than one delegate could appoint a young adult as one of their delegates. A mentoring system—through the Young Adult Delegate at Assembly program—is in place to help young adults participate fully in the delegate process.

Volunteering provides another way for many young adults to participate in convention.

"Whether you're volunteering, reconnecting with a former pastor or possibly meeting someone for the first time, it's so much fun," says Brockmueller, looking back especially fondly to Columbus 2009, where he encountered his future wife, Angie, between sessions. "Who knows what can happen at convention … you might even meet your spouse."

At Pittsburgh 2011, special activities planned for young adults will include seminars on young-adult topics, get-togethers in the young adult lounge, service projects and social outings. Young adults can attend either the youth or adult worship services and seminars.

Terry Shue, director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA, says: "Sending a young adult delegate to convention to represent your congregation communicates that young adult voices are valued and need to be heard. We encourage congregations to set aside funds to help young adult delegates be able to attend, and if they're able, to contribute to a scholarship fund to help send young adults from congregations with fewer resources. We would like to see more racial/ethnic young adult participants as well."—*Tim Huber for Mennonite Church USA*

Luther and Geneva Shetler of Bluffton, Ohio celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Dec. 22 in the home that they built together over 50 years ago. They have been the center of family life for their five children, 14 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, in-laws and friends as they have hosted many a gathering with wonderful food, animated conversation, much laughter and lots of love.

South Korean partners pave way of peace

Korea Anabaptist Center coordinator concerned about North and South Korea

Though Jae Young Lee doesn't think the recent North Korean shelling of South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island will lead to full-scale war, as peace program coordinator for the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) he is alarmed by what is happening in both North and South Korea.

"I think it is seriously time for all of us—Koreans and others [in the international community]—to realize we need to create a concrete and peaceful resolution to our deadlock situation," Lee says.

The Korean peninsula is a land sharply divided. Though an armistice signed in 1953 ended international involvement in the three-year Korean War, it essentially produced a 57-year standoff between North and South Korea that continues to this day. Periodically this uneasy cease-fire erupts in violence. On Nov. 23, 2010, North and South Korea traded salvos over Yeonpyeong Island in the disputed West Sea/Yellow Sea in the first artillery exchange on the territory of the Korean Peninsula since the end of the Korean War. It was a clash that displaced 1,000 people, left at least four dead and many wounded.

Karen Spicher, a Mennonite Mission Network worker who serves as a communications administrator with Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI), lives just south of the capital city of Seoul and teaches English at KAC's language institute. She said the shelling on Yeonpyeong Island brought a strong response from Korean students.

"People seem more afraid than before, in response to previous incidents," Spicher says. One of her students, a young woman, immediately texted her husband upon learning of the shelling, telling him she wanted to leave Korea.

"There are many different opinions in this country about peacebuilding efforts," Spicher says, "but right now the media are raising a voice for retaliation and the need for increased defense. So thoughts of peacemaking are far from most people's minds."

Due to this legacy of conflict, it is appropriate that South Korea is to be home to the newly formed NARPI, an outreach project of another Mennonite Mission Network partner, the Korea Anabaptist Center. Inspired by attending Eastern Mennonite University's Summer Peacebuilding Institute, Harrisonburg, Va., Lee and fellow Canadian Mennonite Bible College graduate Kyong Jung Kim, along with Tim Froese of Mennonite Church Canada, founded the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul in 2001.

Nine years of work with conflict transformation, restorative justice and peace education in Seoul helped KAC organizers recognize the potential for an expanded regional program. The result is the NARPI, which began organizing in 2009. With NARPI's creation, local peace leaders hope to encourage regional collaborative efforts that will highlight the way of nonviolence.

Northeast Asia is an area of the world long-fraught with deep cultural and political divisions. And while other peacemaking organizations exist in China, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea, Taiwan and Far East Russia, interagency communication is limited, which hinders cohesive efforts at peacebuilding.

In 2009, NARPI organizers developed a network of about 200 organizations and individuals in Northeast Asia who are interested in joining a cooperative peace effort. In 2010, a NARPI steering committee from the six countries worked to organize their first summer training programs.

Meetings in Seoul and on Peace Boat (on its voyage from Yokohama to Hong Kong) resulted in plans for the first summer peacebuilding program, which is to be held in August. Also in 2010, Mission Network helped NARPI obtain a grant from the Showalter Foundation, a Mennonite philanthropic organization, which will be used for workshops, material development and administration.—*DeVonna R. Allison for Mennonite Mission Network*

You are an important influence on the young people in your congregation…

Be an advocate for EMU
and help prepare a new generation
of **servant leaders.**

(800) 368-2665
admiss@emu.edu
www.emu.edu

Eastern Mennonite University

Bethel sees greatest enrollment increase

Other Mennonite colleges remain steady to last year's enrollment

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has had the greatest enrollment increase among the five Mennonite Church USA colleges during the 2010-2011 school year: 476 students compared with 437 last year, an 8.9 percent increase. According to a Sept. 30, 2010, release, 127 new students on campus last fall were first-time freshmen—the largest freshman class at Bethel in a decade—and 59 students were transfers.

"It's certainly encouraging to see an increasing number of students selecting Bethel," says Brad Born, vice president for academic affairs. "This success also affirms the hard work of a professional admissions staff who worked in close collaboration with faculty and other staff to forge a unified campus effort to invite more students into the Bethel experience."

Bluffton (Ohio) University had near-steady enrollment, but its graduate student enrollment set a record with 130 students. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., also had near-steady enrollment, with a 2.2 percent decrease from last year. EMU's newest graduate-level program, MS in Nursing, began Aug. 28, 2010, with 15 students. Hesston (Kan.) College experienced a 2.5 percent increase from last year, and Goshen (Ind.) College had a 5.1 percent decrease.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, had an 11.1 percent increase from last year. EMS went from 126 students to 140 students. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., experienced an enrollment decrease: 141 enrolled this year compared with 156 last year, a decrease of 9.6 percent.

Several factors contributed to the drop in enrollment at AMBS this fall, Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, said on Dec. 3, 2010. First, "the 2010 AMBS graduating class of 40 students was one of the largest in 10 years."

Wenger Shenk also said that the total number of seminary students in North America has dropped by 20 percent since 2000. "Our incoming class was relatively small primarily because at least 10 people who were admitted to study at AMBS were able to receive full-ride scholarships to other seminaries, and seven others would have liked to come but indicated they did not have adequate financing," Wenger Shenk said.

"AMBS is committed in the coming years to develop the scholarship support that is critical to enabling gifted young people to be formed as leaders for God's mission in the world, in partnership with congregations across the church."
—*Anna Groff*

Enrollment numbers for Mennonite colleges, universities and seminaries

	FTE 2009-2010	Headcount 2009-2010	FTE 2010-2011	Headcount 2010-2011
Bethel College	425	437	464	476
Bluffton University	858	896	838	898
Eastern Mennonite University	865	898	864	878
Goshen College	886	920	826	873
Hesston	414	437	425	448
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary	102.2	156	79.8	141
Eastern Mennonite Seminary	72.6	126	76.9	140
TOTALS	3,622.8	3,870	3,573.7	3,854

Source: Mennonite Education Agency. The figures do not include graduate students or adult, degree-completion students on three campuses.

Thousands of unique visitors

Mennonite Church USA institutions find that members use their websites.

Mennonite organizations have joined the Internet revolution in ways that are changing business-as-usual. According to a poll conducted by *The Mennonite*, the websites of Mennonite Church USA, agencies and Mennonite-related organizations receive thousands of visitors each month.

For the month of October 2010, Mennonite Church USA's website received the most pageviews (51,482), followed by websites of *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*, respectively.

Google Analytics provides many details about website traffic. In addition to pageviews (the number of pages viewed in a month), Google also keeps track of "absolutely unique visitors" (unduplicated) per month. In this category, *The Mennonite*'s website had 14,564, while the Mennonite Church USA site drew 12,585 (see chart).

Almost all the organizations polled also have Facebook pages, although some promote them more than others. Four organizations have Twitter accounts.

For Mennonite Publishing Network, web traffic matters less than sales.

"While more visitors is always better than few visitors," says John Longhurst, "the bottom line for MPN is, well, the bottom line. The 'analytic' that really matters for us at the end of the day is the number of items sold."

Since many commercial sites such as Amazon offer MPN products—people access information and purchase items on other sites than MPN's site.

"All I really like to know is that Amazon and other online distributors keep ordering from us on a regular basis," he says.

Most organizations do see a fluctuation in web traffic—not necessarily a clean, steady increase each month.

"We actually had fewer visitors compared with a year ago," says Longhurst. "However, our sales were up by over $31,000 in October 2010, compared with 2009—once again illustrating the most important metric for MPN."

Sheldon Good, assistant editor and web editor for *Mennonite Weekly Review*, says his website's visitors and pageviews were higher in October 2010 than October 2009.

"However, this doesn't mean that over the past year we've seen a steady increase month-to-month," he says, "meaning we have more of a peak and valley trend that's going up over time rather than a straight line that continues to go up. This is likely connected to an unpredictable news environment.

"Plus, over the past few months, our blog has generated almost as much traffic as news stories, which shows people are increasingly interested in various perspectives."

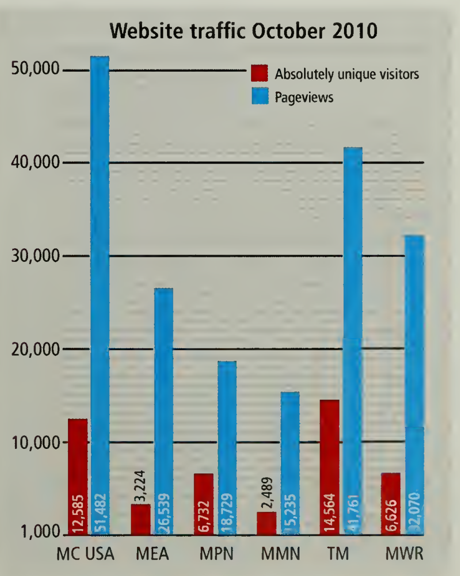
The monthly percentage of new visitors to *MWR*'s website is consistently increasing, Good says. Also, in October 2010, 53 percent of visitors came one time, while more than 11 percent visited more than 200 times. For *The Mennonite*, 54 percent of visitors came one time, and 2.63 percent came more than 200 times.

There is a difference between a site that is a source for news and corporate sites.

"Organizations use their websites for purposes that are not apples-to-apples," says Everett Thomas, editor of *The Mennonite*. "We have found ours to be an excellent place to aggregate the many news releases and photos sent to us each month. Our website has also let us create several electronic magazines, such as the weekly *TMail* and the monthly, Spanish-language *Meno Acontecer*.

MHS Alliance did not have Google Analytics set up in October 2010 but plans to in the future. Everence, still known as Mennonite Mutual Aid in October 2010, did not provide its traffic information. Everence does not have a Facebook page or Twitter account.

"Because of the industry we are in, we have to navigate a lot of legal issues before we can go ahead with these," says Thushan Hemachandra, new media manager at Everence Financial.—*Anna Groff*



EMU home to the largest solar project in the state

Eastern Mennonite University will eliminate 6,000 tons of greenhouse gas.

Jon Styer

The 328 Sunpower module array on the roof of Eastern Mennonite University's Hartzler Library will provide power across the campus.

On Nov. 15, 2010, Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Va., dedicated the largest solar photovoltaic (PV) project built so far in Virginia. The installation on the roof of EMU's Sadie Hartzler Library includes 328 high-efficiency photovoltaic panels.

Secure Futures, LLC of Staunton, Va., developed the project and contracted with Southern Energy Management in North Carolina to design, install and maintain the solar PV system. The solar project will cut EMU's dependence on local utilities, helping reduce the university's reliance on energy from coal and other fossil fuels.

The reduction will eliminate more than 6,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions over the projected 35-year life of the solar panels. In addition, EMU adopted current electrical rates over the 20-year term of its agreement with Secure Futures, protecting the university from electricity rate increases. Secure Futures has formed a subsidiary Harrisonburg-based company co-owned with local investors to own and operate the project.

Under a financing program embraced by colleges and universities in high solar states, EMU hosts the installation, while Community Solar owns and manages the equipment, allowing EMU to gain access to on-site solar power without paying the capital cost of installing PV panels or the fees of ongoing maintenance.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

Distracted driving...
worth your life?
Texting and driving ... 23 times more likely to be in an accident!
Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Goshen goes beyond burgers and fries

New food service provider prioritizes organic, local, healthy and tasty foods.

Jodi H. Beyeler

Goshen College dining hall chef Jeremy Corson cuts produce from a small garden he had around a patio eating area during the late fall.

College dining halls are known for large amounts of food thrown away by students and for grease-laden burgers and fries. But something different is going on in the Goshen (Ind.) College dining hall with AVI Fresh food service provider leading the way in caring for the students' health and the earth's well-being. In 2009, when the college was choosing a new food service provider, these qualities set them apart.

The dining hall service includes gourmet food prepared right in front of students at stations, a commitment to whole or multi grains and as much local and organic food as is possible, food options for people with special dietary needs, and recipes from around the world. During 2010, the dining hall managed a garden around a patio eating area that was both beautiful and used in meals, especially the herbs.

Students and dining hall employees have also collaborated on a compost program. This includes the "preconsumer waste" from the kitchen preparation and the "postconsumer waste" of food not eaten by students. Students divide their waste into bins; student volunteers from the Eco-PAX Club and the dining hall employees then take the waste to a giant composter outside daily (created by adjunct professor and composting expert Lew Naylor). The compost is then used on campus as a fertilizer. Previously, about 950 pounds of compostable material was thrown out in the trash each day. *—Jodi H. Beyeler of Goshen College*

BE MORE THAN A TOURIST

2011 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST
& THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 6 - 16)
JAMAICA - ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS
(January 28 - February 6)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS IN KENYA & TANZANIA
(February 7 - 18)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE TOUR
(February 23 - March 5)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 20 - April 2)
MEDA IN MOROCCO (March 25 - April 5)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE
WITH PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (April 27 - May 6)
EXPLORE THE WORLD OF PAUL
WITH TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4 - 20)
LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE
(May 11 - 24)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13 - 22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH JOHN RUTH
(June 23 - July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE...
(ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22 - August 4)
MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE WITH EDGAR STOESZ
(September 19 - 28)
A PILGRIMAGE TO PORTUGAL
(September 20 - 30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND WITH THE LEDERACHS
(September 22 - October 3)
FROM NAZARETH TO ROME (November 10 - 22)
BEHIND THE VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT WITH MEDA
(November 14 - 26)

2012 TOURS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (February 3 - 23)
TOUR TO GUATEMALA (February 24 - March 4)
MEXICO & ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9 - 18)
FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF MOSES (April 16 - 27)
GLORY OF RUSSIA:
MOSCOW TO ST. PETERSBURG (July 3 - 13)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

Top 10 Mennonite Church USA events in 2010

1. Arizona's SB 1070 challenges convention plans

Beginning with July 2010, each issue of *The Mennonite* carried a report, opinion piece or letter to the editor addressing the question of whether to hold the Mennonite Church USA convention for 2013 in Phoenix. A new immigration law, Senate Bill 1070, challenges the plans. Critics say the law will lead to racial profiling and create a hostile environment for Hispanics. On Aug. 12-13, 2010, a Mennonite Church USA delegation visited Phoenix. On Sept. 23-25, 2010, at an all-boards meeting held jointly with the Constituency Leaders Council, Executive Board members discussed the decision in Pittsburgh. Iglesia Menonita Hispana has opposed Phoenix as the convention site. The Executive Board plans to make the decision at its meeting in Tampa Jan. 7-9. (*multiple issues*)

2. Goshen (Ind.) College plays the national anthem

Goshen (Ind.) College announced on Jan. 22, 2010, that it would play an instrumental version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" before select sports events on campus, followed by prayer. This decision took effect March 23, 2010, at the start of the spring sports season and was made after discussion and deliberation during the previous year. Providing a more hospitable atmosphere for athletic events was a primary reason for the recommendation and ultimately for the decision. (*March*)

3. MCC worker Glen Lapp killed in Afghanistan

A Mennonite Central Committee worker in Afghanistan, Glen D. Lapp of Lancaster, Pa., 40, was killed on Aug. 5, 2010, in a shooting incident in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province. Lapp, a nurse, worked with an MCC partner, International Assistance Mission, that provides eye care and medical help in Afghanistan. He was traveling home with an IAM medical team after a two-week "eye camp" trip. Local police found 10 bodies on Aug. 6, 2010, next to abandoned vehicles. Ron Flaming of MCC described Lapp as someone who was always willing to help but also humble. (*September*)

4. Debate around the MC USA building in Elkhart, Ind., and groundbreaking

On June 15, 2010, people gathered on the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind., to bless the ground that will be the site of the denomination's new office building. Spark Renewal, a group of Mennonite Church USA members, protested the building project and how this project may affect the denomination's future. The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board voted to move forward with the building plans on June 12, 2010, and decided to give a 10 percent tithe of any new funds donated to the building project to various racial/ethnic ministries and needs. A leader from Spark Renewal spoke during the June 15, 2010, blessing service. The building contractor, DJ Construction of Goshen, Ind., began work on the new building on June 16, 2010. (*July, August*)

Liesa Unger

During the Lutheran-Mennonite service of forgiveness July 22, 2010, Larry Miller of Mennonite World Conference presented an image of Dirk Willems. Miller noted the image has become symbolic of Anabaptist ideals of loving the enemy but acknowledged that such stories have sometimes led Anabaptist-Mennonites to adopt the martyr tradition as a "badge of superiority, … blinding us to the frailties and failures that are also deeply rooted in our tradition."

5. Mennonites respond to Haiti

Mennonites volunteered and offered donations to support those affected by the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. Groups from Mennonite Central Committee, Virginia Mennonite Missions and others traveled to Haiti. Susanne Bradley Brown, a pediatrician and health-care legislation analyst from Albuquerque, N.M., will lead MCC's long-term disaster response to the Haiti earthquake (*multiple issues*).

6. Deaths of leaders: Peter Dyck, J. Lawrence Burkholder

Peter J. Dyck—storyteller, Mennonite pastor, author and lifelong servant to people in need around the world—died of cancer on Jan. 4, 2010. He was 95 years old and lived in Scottdale, Pa. He is

well known in Anabaptist communities, especially for his work with Mennonite Russian refugees and with Mennonite Central Committee. (*February*)

Goshen (Ind.) College President Emeritus J. Lawrence Burkholder, 92, passed away early on June 24, 2010, in Goshen. Burkholder served in China and India and earned his doctor of theology degree summa cum laude from Princeton. In 1961, Burkholder was called to serve as a professor at Harvard Divinity School. In 1971, he returned to Goshen College to serve as its 11th president. (*August*)

7. Apologies: Lutherans to Mennonites and Mennonites to Native Americans

Delegates to the Lutheran World Federation on July 22, 2010, in Germany asked forgiveness for the violent persecution of Anabaptists in the 16th century. They also asked for forgiveness for the way negative portrayals of Anabaptists and Mennonites have continued within their communities and theological institutions. Representing the Anabaptist-Mennonite family, Mennonite World Conference acknowledged their request and granted forgiveness. (*August, September*)

Mennonite, Presbyterian and Quaker leaders, along with state and local government officials, apologized and asked forgiveness for 300 years of misunderstanding, neglect and abuse of Native Americans in Lancaster County, Pa., in a public ceremony at First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, on Oct. 9, 2010. (*November*)

8. MVS worker Chloe Weaver killed while biking

Chloe Weaver, a 20-year-old Mennonite Voluntary Service participant, was killed Oct. 24, 2010, in Alamosa, Colo., when an automobile struck her while she was riding her bicycle. Weaver had been serving with the La Jara, Colo., unit of MVS, a Mennonite Mission Network short-term service program, since August 2010. Weaver, from Nederland, Colo., was the daughter of Cindy and Herm Weaver, conference minister for the Mountain States Mennonite Conference. (*December*)

Tom Wenger

Glen Lapp, left, and John Williamson, Mennonite Central Committee Nepal, India, Afghanistan representative, pose for a picture in Kabul in July 2010. Photo by Tom Wenger

9. Mennonite Mutual Aid changes name to Everence

On Nov. 1, 2010, Mennonite Mutual Aid and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union became Everence. According to Everence's leaders, the name change will enable them to broaden their market. However, Everence remains a ministry of Mennonite Church USA (*May*).

10. MPN-Third Way merger

The merger of Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network, became official after the approval of the Mennonite Church Canada General Board on Nov. 13, 2010, in Saskatoon. The two organizations will form a new one that is binational. (*December*).—*compiled by Anna Groff*

What readers thought:

We invited visitors to our website to vote on the top Mennonite Church USA event in 2010. Here is the way they ranked them:

1. Goshen (Ind.) College's national anthem
   31 percent
2. Arizona's bill and convention plans
   27 percent
3. MCC worker Glen Lapp killed
   21 percent
4. Response to Haiti earthquake
   14 percent
5. Mennonite Church USA building plans
   4 percent

We also invited friends of *The Mennonite*'s Facebook page to comment on this exercise:

Glen Guyton: "Helping people in Haiti and responding as Christians is the most significant thing we do. The other events included personal tragedies and difficult choices, but those are a part our everyday lives."

Jeff Gundy: "These 'events' are of several different sorts, from corporate name changes to personal tragedies to institutional controversies to disaster response. I don't know how to weigh them against each other."

A Veterans Day lesson for this third grader

Letter to hospitalized veteran brings return letter with surprising message

Carolyn Rahe

Hayden Rahe with the letter he received from a military veteran.

It was probably not the Veterans Day lesson the teacher intended. The Rahe family was unaware that their third grader, Hayden, had been assigned to write a letter to a military veteran, thanking him for his service to the country. Hayden's veteran was hospitalized at the time.

On Nov. 22, 2010, Hayden received a letter in return.

Dear Hayden,

Thank you for your letter. I was in the Veterans Hospital in Indianapolis when I received your letter. I had a punctured lung. I will be 63 years old on Dec. 19. And this was only my second hospitalization. I served in the Air Force from July 22, 1966, to Oct. 4, 1968, during the Viet Nam era.

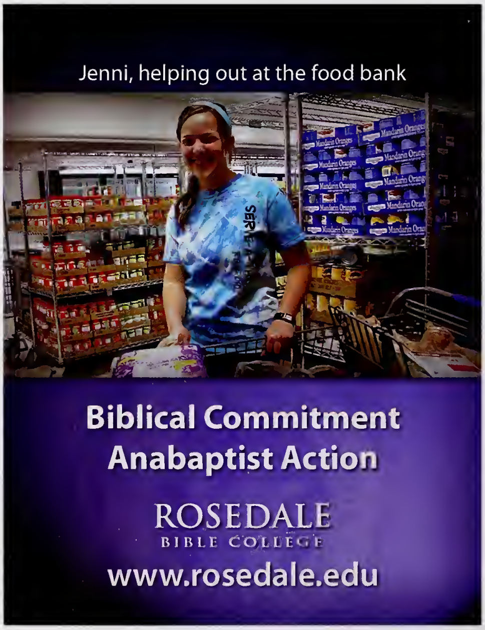
Hayden, please do not allow yourself to get caught up in veteran or military affairs. Many of us are anti-military; we joined so we wouldn't be drafted by the Army or Marines. Hayden, our military interferes with other countries and wastes so very much money that could be spent on free quality health care and a better quality of life for all.

Your friend,

P.S. Hope you get all A's in school!

Hayden is the son of Carolyn and Chris Rahe, web services director for Mennonite Church USA. Their family attends Holdeman Mennonite Church in Wakarusa, Ind. Earlier in the school year, Chris shared with other staff his dismay at the patriotic music program in which Hayden was required to participate.

"What I didn't know at the time," Chris said on Dec. 6, 2010, "was that his class was also instructed to write letters to veterans thanking them for fighting. It turns out the veteran that Hayden's letter went to wrote back. God works in mysterious ways."—*Everett J. Thomas*



Answers to the page 61 puzzle

C	U	C	U	M	B	E	R	S	■	■	L
U	■	A	■	I	■	■	O	■	S	E	A
M	E	L	O	N	S	■	O	■	P	■	M
I	■	E	■	I	U	R	I	L	E	■	B
N	■	■	B	■	P	■	■	■	L	■	■
■	S	H	E	E	P	■	D	A	I	E	S
■	I	■	A	■	E	■	I	■	■	■	K
O	X	E	N	■	R	I	P	E	■	■	I
L	■	■	S	■	■	■	P	■	O	■	N
I	N	N	■	■	R	A	I	S	I	N	S
V	■	U	G	L	Y	■	N	■	L	■	O
E	A	I	■	■	E	G	G	S	■	■	E

Prestigious gathering features Mennonite scholars

They lead American Academy of Religion seminar on racial activism in the church.

How widely known are the histories of African-American and Latino/a Mennonites in the United States? Four Mennonite scholars are sharing their research into these histories and advocating for more research.

At the 2010 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), held Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 2010, in Atlanta, Felipe Hinojosa, James Logan, Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer led a seminar titled "African-American and Latino/a Mennonites: Marginal No More."

These scholars, minus Logan, will present a similar seminar at the next Mennonite convention in Pittsburgh in July.

"Why is it that the reality of African-American and Latino/a histories is rarely a part of Mennonite historical scholarship, when it has been included in broader religious scholarship for many years?" asked Logan, moderator of the seminar and associate professor of religion and African and African-American studies at Earlham College in Richmond, Ind.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus

Felipe Hinojosa

"We as Mennonites need this historical scholarship because European Mennonites have gained from the blood and sweat of these communities and have been a part of the oppression of others," he said in an interview before the event.

Although the seminar explored the experiences and identities of both Latino/a and African-American Mennonites, the presenters chose to have the discussion be part of the Afro-American Religious History Group of the AAR meeting, in an effort to bring together the stories of different groups who have been marginalized.

During the seminar, Shands Stoltzfus presented from her dissertation in process a paper titled "Black, Female and Mennonite: Navigating Cultural, Political and Religious Identity." She is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Shands Stoltzfus said that although there is increased interest in the history of Mennonite women and religious-cultural identity, the stories of African-American women have not been sufficiently told.

"In order to get a full picture of Mennonite history in the United States," she said, "we must discuss race."

Miller Shearer, assistant professor in African-American studies at the University of Montana in Missoula, added to the discussion about African-American experiences in his presentation, titled "More than Fresh Air: African-American Children's Influence on Mennonite Religious Practice, 1950-1979." He explored how African-American children participating in the rural hosting ventures, known as Fresh Air programs, shaped their hosts' racial perspectives and nudged them toward racial activism.

"The Fresh Air children," he said, "acted as civil rights agents through courageous action. They had little power but brought about changes in their hosts." Through their experiences, the children also helped establish an independent African-American Mennonite church, he said.

James Logan

Tobin Miller Shearer

Hinojosa, assistant professor in the Department of history at Texas A&M University, presented on his exploration of Latino/a identity and activism in the Minority Ministries Council of the former Mennonite Church from 1968 to 1974. Comprising Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and African Americans, the MMC presented an organized movement for racial equality, leadership development and new approaches to urban missions within the church, Hinojosa said.

He noted that while the MMC provided a space for black and brown men to voice their concerns, it also raised questions about their manhood, their religious beliefs and their place as activists.

Hinojosa described the conversation as "complex" because Latinos are often associated with Catholicism. However, Latino Mennonites are both Anabaptist and evangelical, he said.

Within the context of the black and Chicano power movements, Hinojosa said, Latino men felt pressure to prove that being Mennonite and associated with pacifism "did not make them wimps." Hence the title of his research paper came from a quotation heard at a Mennonite crosscultural youth gathering in 1972: "'Jesus Christ Made Me a Macho': Latino/a Identity and Activism within the Mennonite Church, 1968-1974."—*Joanna Shenk of Mennonite Church USA*

Mennonite couple opens winery in Virginia

Curt Hartman says his church, friends support him in this new venture.

Photo provided

bluestone vineyard

Curt and Jackie Hartman by their sign for Bluestone Vineyard.

When someone enjoys a glass of Curt Hartman's wine, Hartman says he feels like he's giving him or her a small part of himself. The significance of the wine lies in the fact that Hartman, 56, knows everything that went into that glass.

Hartman, a member of Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church, opens his winery, Bluestone Vineyard in Bridgewater, Va., to the public this month. The website is www.bluestonevineyard.com.

Formerly a car dealership owner, Hartman says he's learned patience and flexibility through making wine.

"There's nothing I can do to make the wine mature faster or the vines to grow faster," he says.

To his pleasant surprise, Hartman says, most people in his congregation, especially the minister and his Sunday school class, encourage him and support this wine-making venture.

"No one's been judgmental about it," he says, acknowledging that some may not approve but haven't said anything "nasty" about the Hartmans' family operation.

Photo provided

Curt Hartman in his winery's showroom.

"You would not believe how many church leaders have stood in our garage and sampled our wine," he says. "I hear a lot of condemnation of the misuse of alcohol, but I don't really hear con of the product itself."

One man from his church, who Hartman assumed did not approve of his winery, told him one Sunday, "You have relatives that made wine. Do you have some Hutwohl blood in you?" The man enthusiastically described his visit to the Hutwohl winery in Switzerland and later sent Hartman bottle labels.

Hartman says Mennonites seem to approach alcohol differently than 30 or 40 years ago. Some adopt a "more European or biblical view," he says, that "wine is a good part of life and is to be enjoyed within the bounds of self-restraint."

Hartman remembers the time he visited his youngest son in Germany during his son's Intermenno term. They had a Christmas Eve meal at the Mennonite minister's house that year, and the minister brought out three bottles of local wine.

"It was a local pride thing to him," says Hartman. "I thought it was a healthy attitude. I see attitudes developing here like that."

The Hartmans' winemaking began about nine years ago, when his Sunday school class gathered at his property for a picnic. Phil Kreider, also a winemaker, noticed the Hartmans' 25 acres; Kreider lamented that he'd run out of room himself. The Hartmans and Kreider started making wine together.

The operation took off in 2007, after Hartman decided to sell his car dealership. Hartman brought in the vineyards management program director of Virginia Tech, who affirmed their vineyard plans. Hartman and his family established a business plan in 2007 and began planting grapes. In 2008, Hartman and his son, Lee, made 160 cases, the legal amount that two individuals can make in Virginia without a license.

"It was OK, but not spectacular," he says with a good-natured laugh. But the mediocre did not go to waste. The Hartmans gave away many of the bottles and served it at their home, but did not sell any.

In September 2009, they received a license to be a "farm winery," a status set for a small wine operation that requires the winemaker to raise at least half their grapes and live on the winery property. In May 2010, construction began for the winery showroom; it was completed last October.

Hartman attended Eastern Mennonite High School in Harrisonburg, then Goshen (Ind.) College for one year before finishing at James Madison University, where he also earned his MBA. He and Jackie got married in 1975.—*Anna Groff*

Churches host art galleries for First Fridays

Lancaster City becoming East Coast artist hub with more than 70 art venues

RED RAVEN ART COMPANY, LLC
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CARLSON CULTURAL TRUST

Dale D. Gehman

A crowd during a Lancaster (Pa.) First Friday event

Lancaster, Pa., is known around the world as an Amish mecca. It is also known for the variety of Mennonites that live there.

In the last 10 years the city of Lancaster has become an East Coast art hub with as many as 70 art venues.

"All of us, Mennonite artists or not," says Mary Lou Weaver Houser, an artist from Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, "are enjoying the resurgence of Lancaster's downtown energy and growing interest in the arts."

In the evening of the first Friday of the month, downtown Lancaster becomes a busy hive of people perusing the many art galleries, museums, art shops and restaurants. Many of the galleries are along Prince Street, which has wall-to-wall people maneuvering from gallery to gallery.

Two Mennonite churches have their own art galleries. Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster has Parrot Gallery in their basement. West End Mennonite Fellowship's gallery is called West End Art Gallery, which uses part of the sanctuary and leading hallways to show the exhibits.

"For many people, the Parrot Gallery provides the first time to set foot inside a Mennonite church," says Weaver Houser. "The arts represent our most colorful form of hospitality, and our congregation has been growing in diversity and numbers as a result. Many newcomers exclaim that they cannot believe they are now actually attending Mennonite worship services and are loving it."

"When First Fridays were just starting we recognized the events as an important part of Lancaster City's culture," says Bethany Reiff, who chairs the art gallery committee at West End Mennonite Fellowship, "and thought it would be a good way to connect with the community while also encouraging the arts. We were actually the decor committee and then with this new vision we blossomed into the art gallery committee."

One section of Prince Street is Gallery Row, which extends about six blocks. Liz Hess of Liz Hess Gallery is one of the artists along Gallery Row. Her amazing paintings are collected and sought after by many private collectors.

Most of her clients are local and within the surrounding states, but she also has her work all over the world.

"My biggest clients are a couple from London, England," says Hess, "who fly in twice a year to choose originals from my collection for their two homes. They happened to be vacationing in [Pennsylvania] some years ago, came to downtown Lancaster as tourists and stumbled upon my gallery."

A large piece of Hess' hangs in the offices of a firm on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

"Again, these clients stumbled upon my gallery when they were in downtown Lancaster and commissioned the large original for their offices," Hess says.

Some of the galleries have live music either inside the gallery or on the sidewalk near the entrance of the gallery. Some galleries are the artists', exhibiting only their art work, while other galleries rent wall space to other artists.

Bob Redcay, a water color artist of bobsfunktionart.com, rents space from a gallery.

"One of the things I like about First Friday in Lancaster City," says Redcay, "is the fact that I can take some additional risks with subject matter, composition or style as an artist and not be judged.

"There is more tolerance or appreciation there that 'Mennonite' settings may not appreciate. A lot of conservative religious persons look strictly/exclusively for 'realistic' art."
—*Dale D. Gehman for* The Mennonite

1,095 households contribute to *The Mennonite*

Includes email appeal to *TMail* subscribers that netted $1,245

Households that subscribe to *The Mennonite* were generous in 2010, with combined contributions of $77,065 through Dec. 15, 2010. Contributions made after that date will be included next year if we again publish such a list.

"We are so grateful for this support," says Everett J. Thomas, editor of *The Mennonite*. "Because of the recession, many of our advertisers could not purchase as many ads in 2010, and that hurt our advertising revenue. This support from readers filled in some of the shortfall."

The Mennonite, Inc., board set a contributions target of $70,000 for the current fiscal year, that ends Jan. 31. Total contributions passed that mark in November 2010.

The Mennonite, which receives no subsidy from Mennonite Church USA, is supported by three primary revenue streams: subscriptions, advertising and contributions. The print magazine has also provided funding for both a website and two ezines: a free, English-language weekly called *TMail*, and a free, Spanish-language monthly called *Meno Acontecer*. These electronic media are now generating revenue on their own through advertising and a separate email appeal for contributions from readers of those media.

The list below does not include 318 individuals or families who elected to remain anonymous.

Abe Graber Memorial Fund
Merlin & Kathleen Aeschliman
Myron & Esther Kniss Aigsburger
Russell & Gladys Alderfer
Wilmer & Lois Alderfer
Bob Alexander
Marion Alliman
Clifford & Lois Amstutz
Harlan & Jean Anders
Marvin & Grace Anders
Elda Bachman
Gail Bachman
Joseph Baer
Floyd & Justina Bartel
Jim & Anita Bartlett
Karl & Evelyn Bartsch
Eugene & Lola Basinger
Richard & Jeanette Baum
Harvey & Kathy Bauman
Marian Baum
Howard & Phyllis Baumgartner
Dave & Marlene Beachy
Lora Beachy
Vernon & Nora Beachy
Clyde Beaty
Katie Beiler
Lois Bender
John Benner
Millard & Lura Benner
Willard & Glenda Bergey
John & Evelyn Bertsche
Ivan Beyeler
Gladys Beyler
Big Mama's Kitchen & Catering
John & Dee Birkey
Carrol Birky
Mel & Jane Birky
Suzanne Bishop
James & June Bixler
John & Rebecca Bixler
Marjorie Bixler
Roy Blackstone
Lynette Block
Nelson & Peggy Blosser
Celia Blough
Michael & Marlene Bogard
Regan Bonato
Alvin & Mary Bontrager
Clara Bontrager
Ellis & Ruby Bontrager
Marion Bontrager
Warren & Annabelle Bontrager
Harold Bontreger
Stanley & Marylin Boyer
Helen Bradley
Willis & Ina Breckbill
Anthony & Mary Brenneman
Clair & Faye Brenneman
Michael & Lena Brown
Roland Brown
Ray Brubacher
James & Carley Brubaker
Kenton & Shirley Brubaker
Lester & Lois Brubaker
Robert & Margaret Bruckhart
John & Miriam Buckwalter
Anne Buller
Arlin & Maretta Buller
Eldo Buller
Janet Bumbaugh
Arnold & Phyllis Burkey
Sarah Burkhalter
Earl & Donna Burkholder
Paul & Miriam Burkholder
Ruth Burkholder
Thomas & Kristina Burnett
David & Joyce Buschert
Roy & Ruby Byler
Sue Byler
Peter Callahan
Steven Carpenter
Elizabeth Guedea Carreno
Mahlon & Elizabeth Cassel
Milton Cender
Rosa Cender
Terry & Barbara Chappell
Clayton & Dorothy Charles
Miriam Charles
Milton Claassen
Cathy Conrad
Robert Coon
Daniel & Emily Coyne
Larry & Ginny Cress
Marjorie Crystle
John Cullar
Paul & Lois Dagen
Kenneth Deckert
Lee & Ruth Delp
Kenton Derstine
Margaret Derstine
Florence Detweiler
Alden Dick
Raymond & Amanda. Dick
Carrie Diener
Clayton & Inez Diener
Darrel & Leona Diener
Edward Diener
Inez Diener
Angela Dietzel
Ivan & Doris Diller
Rose Diller
Kevin & Wanda Dorsing
John & Sheila Duerksen
Joseph & Mary Lou Duerksen
Mamo & Mary Dula
Daniel & Elizabeth Dunmore
Amy Durkee
George Dyke
Myron & Geraldine Ebersole
John & Mary Eicher
Joseph Eigsti
Orlin Eigsti
Jacob & Lillian Elias
Charles & Shirley Elliott
Paul & Darlene Engbrecht
Royce & Betty Engle
Ruth Epp
Ross Erb
Larry Esmonde
John & Kathryn Fairfield
Becky Felton
Lloyd & Evelyn Fisher
Arlo & Geneva Flickner
Jacob Flisher
Marvin & Jeannie Flores
Roger Flueckiger
Benjamin & Stephanie Fouse
Jack & Mary Fransen
Harvey & Grace Freed
Roderick & Beulah Fretz
Mary Frey
Don & Eleanor Friesen
Elmer & Bertha Friesen
Elsie Friesen

Rubena Friesen
Ruby Friesen
Walter Friesen
Harry Froese
Mary Garbin
Lee Gascho
Charles & Marjorie Gautsche
Eunice Gautsche
Rhoda Gehman
Charles Geiser
David & Fern Gerber
Harry & Elaine Gerber
Benjamin Gerig
William & Lucille Gering
Paul & Arlene Gingerich
Richard & Shirley Gingerich
Simon Gingerich
Lloyd & Orpha Gingrich
Paul & Ann Gingrich
Wilma Gingrich
Dirk Giseburt
Aaron & Marcella Glanzer
Glennon Heights Mennonite Church
Bruce & Helen Glick
Elvie & Mary Glick
Maggie Glick
Stan & Susan Godshall
Eugene & Waneta Goeing
Hilda Goering
Lloyd Goering
Milo & Evelyn Goering
Paul & Wilda Goering
Victor & Elizabeth Goering
Elma Goertz
Henry & Alice Goertz
Edwin & Betty Good
Howard Good
Jim & Dorcas Good
Norman Good
Vernon Good
Charles Goodling
Robert & Lucille Gotwals
Alice Graber
Alvin & Dolores Graber
Dave & Bonnie Graber
Joseph & Cora Graber
Peter & Mary Graber
Sam Graber
Glen & Beverly Grandlinard
Meryl Grasse
Merlin & Mary Grieser
Peter & Frances Grill
Anna Groff & Brian Milller
Marlin & Sue Groff
David Lawrence Groh
Ardella Gross
Marjorie Gunden
Opal Gunden
Ruth Gunden
Marge Habegger
Marianna Habegger
Barth Hague
Kathryn Hamsher
Mary Handrich
Mary Handrick
Mary Ellen Handwork
Karen Hansberry
Bruce & Kathleen Harder
Ethel Harder
Lawrence & Kathy Harder
Martin Harder
Milton & Katharine Harder
Ruth Harder
Merril & Gladys Harms
Dwight & Pearl Hartman
Harold & Catherine Hartman
Peter & Marilyn Hartman
Ken & Betty Hartzler
Roger & Donna Haun
Suzie Hawkins
Mary Lou Hayes
Vivian Headings
Melvin Headrick
Esther Heatwole
Franklyn Heatwole
Harold Heiser
Wilmer & Velma Heisey
Duane & Ruth Hershberger
Edgar & De Elda Hershberger
Gladys Hershberger
Lotus & Judith Hershberger
Ray & Rosemary Hershberger
Hiram & Mary Jane Hershey
James Hershey
Kenneth & Joanne Hershey
Lynford & Jeanie Hershey
Marlin & Barbara Hershey
Mary Hershey
Dale Hess
Mervin & Nora Hess
John Hiebert
Harley & Margaret Himes
Harold & Hazel Himes
Lila Hoard
Robert & Rachael Hochstedler
Edie Hochstetler
Orlin & Lores Hochstetler
William & Rosemary Hochstetler
Clyde & Carolyn Hockman
David & Paige Hodo
Samuel & Joyce Hofer
Salome Holsinger
David & Jane Hooley
Elizabeth Hoover
Ellen Horst
Laurence & Ramona Horst
Samuel Horst
David & Sarah Hostetler
Grace Hostetler
John & Katherine Hostetler
Grace Hostetter
Gordon & Jeanne Houser
John Huebert
Arlin & Naomi Hunsberger
George & Jean Hurst
Carl & Lorena Hyde
John & Darlene Imhoff
Maurice Imhoff
Elizabeth Jacobs
Melvin Jantz
Vern & Helen Jantz
Wallace & Sylvia Jantz
Daniel Jantzi
Vernon & Dorothy Jantzi
Elva Janzen
Elizabeth Jeschke
Galen Johns
Timothy & Carol Johnson
Walter & Mary Ann Jost
Stanley & Marilyn Kamp
David & LouAnn Kanagy
Franklin & Linda Kandel
Byron & Barbara Kauffman
Dennis & Judith Kauffman
Galen Kauffman
Maxine Kauffman
Paul Kauffman
Ralph & Laurel Kauffman
Ray & Tina Kauffman
Ruth Kauffman
Joel & Nancy Kauffmann
Berni Kaufman
Lorraine Kaufman
Paul & Bertha Kaufman
Sam & Joan Kaufman
Jim & Lois Kaufmann
Ruth Kaufmann
Carl & Gladys Keener
John & Margaret Keiser
Frank & Holly Keller
Earl & Janice Kellogg
Martyne Kempel
Dale Kempf
Don & Shirley Kempf
Wayne & Esther Kempf
Arthur & Lois Kennel
Kurt Kennel
Lynn Kennell
Dale & Faye King
Daniel & Lynette King
David & Debra King
James King
John & Evelyn King
Lois King
Mark King
Leonard Kingsley
Loyal & Bertha Klassen
Ulrich & Theda Klemm
Vernon & Carol Klingenberg
Tom & Catherine Klug
Clara Kolb
Elvin & Connie Krabill
Elvin & Esther Kraybill
J Nelson & Ellen Kraybill
Kenneth & Beth Kraybill
Simon & Mary Jean Kraybill
Rudy & Roberta Krehbiel
Alan & Eleanor Kreider
Alice Kreider
Evelyn Kreider
Robert & Lois Kreider
Lester Kropf
Tom & Barbara Kuenne
Paul Kurtz
Stephen & Mabel Kurtz
Marlin Kym
Marlin & Betta Kym
Goldie Lambright
Clyde & Jane Landes
Dave & Carolyn Landis
Jacob & June Landis
Jay & Peggy Landis
Jeff Landis
Alan & Janet Lapp
Omar & Sara Lapp
Ivan & Mary Ellen Leaman
Paul Leaman
Mary Grace Leatherman
Lebanon Mennonite Church
Paul & Mary Lederach
Joanne Lederman
Robert & Nancy Lee
Elwin LeFevre
Betty Lehman
Elton & Phyllis Lehman

1,095 households contribute $77,065

Esther Lehman
Freeman & Eileen Lehman
Grace Lehman
Jane Lehman
Joel & Darlene Lehman
John & Margaret Lehman
Milton Lehman
Paul & Mary Alice Lehman
Richard & Colleen Lehman
Willis Lehman
William & Katelyn Leichty
Melvin & Lois Leidig
Norman & Vicki Lichti
Loveda Liechty
Richard & Ruth Liechty
Robert & Miriam Liechty
Stanley & Ruth Liechty
Clifford & Hope Lind
Iola Lind
Christina Litwiller
Dale & Rosina Litwiller
Sarah Litwiller
Wendell & Betty Litwiller
Franzie Loepp
Leonard & Shirley Loganbill
Charles & Barbara Longenecker
Elmer Longenecker
Ronald Lora
Marilyn Manley
Lester & Leota Mann
Maple Grove Mennonite Church
George & Arlene Mark
Danile Stoltzfus Martens
Barbara Martin
Don & Barbara Martin
Janet Martin
John & Flora Martin
Joseph Martin
Mary Alice Martin
Nelson & Mary Martin
Paul & Betty Martin
Robert & Alverta Martin
Ruth Martin
Weaver & Kathryn Martin
Walter Massanari
Ernest & Esther Mast
James & Bernadine Mast
LeRoy & Sherry Mast
Lucretia Mattson
Wilma McKee
Donald & Alta Mellinger
John & Annetta Mellinger
Mennonite Mutual Aid
Elmer & Violet Metzler
Everett & Margaret Metzler
James & Rachel Metzler
Arnold & Carol Miller
Arthur Miller
Brenda Miller
Byron & Ellen Miller
Cecil & Judy Miller
Clyde & Helen Miller
David & Joanne Miller
David & Linda Miller
Delwyn & Patricia Miller
Edwin & Mary Jane Miller
Ellen Miller
Galen & Sue Miller
George & Emma Miller
Gordon & Susan Miller
Harold Miller
James & Joy Miller
Janis Miller
Larry & Wilma Miller
Lawrence & Marjora Miller
Leo & Dorothy Miller
Lloyd & Mary Jo Miller
MaryJo Miller
Maynard & Ruth Miller
Mildred Miller
Patricia Miller
Richard Miller
Ruth Miller
Vernon & Margaret Miller
Virgil & Mary Ann Miller
William & Phyllis Miller
Willis & Dorothy Miller
Roscoe Miller
Joyce Mills
Don & Marty Minter
Mary Mishler
Money Management Group
Thom & Martha Moore
Richard & Doris Morgan
John & Mary Anne Moser
Charles & Carolyn Moyer
Elaine Moyer
Harold & Rosemary Moyer
Jason Moyer
Margaret Moyer
Phillip & Betsy Moyer
David & Joanne Moyer-Diener
Kenneth & Sheril Mullett
Lorraine Murphy
Barbara Musselman
James & Aldine Musser
Freida Myers
Ray & Carol Myers
Donald T. Nair
Calvin Nafziger
Edith Nafziger
Eldon & Laverne Nafziger
Myrl Nafziger
Stanley & Ruth Naylor
Tilman & Bonnie Neuenschwander
Kendra Neufeld
Roger & Luetta Neumann
Carl & Elaine Newcomer
Greg Newswanger
Larry & Janet Newswanger
Wesley & Betty Newswanger
John Nighswander
Lowell & Miriam Nissley
Wayne & Mary Nitzsche
Miriam Nofsinger
Dave & Ruby Nofziger
Donald & Vietta Nofziger
Robin Nofziger
Kenneth & Lois Noll
Cynthia Nolt
Rhoda Nolt
Susan Nolt
Wilmer & Doris Nolt
Ada Nussbaum
David & Eldina Nussbaum
Harold & Gloria Nussbaum
Donald & Faye Nyce
Carol Oberholtzer
Jacob Oberholtzer
Jay & Rhoda Oberholtzer
Thomas & Brenda Oelschlager
Lila Osborne
Millard & Joyce Osborne
Evan & Eileen Oswald
Paul Oswald
John Otto
Christine Oyer
Mary Oyer
Milford & Winifred Paul
Frank & Carol Peachey
Laban Peachey
Lois Peachey
Paul & Ellen Peachey
Donald & Carolyn Penner
Lauren & Twila Penner
Steve & Glena Penner
Thelma Percoco
Carl Peters
Elmer Petersheim
Anna Marie Peterson
Lena Pettiford
Brian & Lynette Plank
Michael & Darlene Powers
Heber & Cheryl Ramer
Marlan & Marvella Ratzlaff
Richard & Velma Ratzlaff
Barbara Reed
Andrew Reesor-McDowell
Edwin & Ella Regier
Fremont & Sara Regier
Gerhard Reimer
Richard & Lois Reimer
Daniel & Cleta Reinford
Doris Reinhardt
Vern Rempel
Wendell & Aleta Rempel
Loren & Peggy Reusser
Anthony Ricciuti
Joe & Emma Richards
Sharon Richmond
Esther Rinner
Opal Ripley
Donald Roggie
Earl Rohrer
Juan & Odette Rolon
Larry & Sandra Rombout
Carlos & Celina Romero
Leland Ropp
Marilyn Rose
Henry & Charlotte Rosenberger
James Rosenberger
Hank & Marilyn Rossiter
Jay & Anne Roth
Jean Roth
Marlin Rupp
Raymond Rush
Richard Rush
Clarence Ruth
Eleanor Ruth
Ella Ruth
John & Rebecca Rutt
Paul Rutt
Virginia Ryan
Arlene Saner

Martha Sangree
Clair & Nancy Sauder
Delmar Sauder
Melvin Sauder
Reynold & Maurine Sawatzky
Don & Elvira Schierling
Art & Ruth Schmidt
Dorothy Schmidt
Helen Schmidt
Vera Schmidt
Wilbert Schmidt
Alice Schmucker
Walter & Vera Schmucker
Dwayne & Sandra Schrag
Harold Schrag
J.O. & Esther Schrag
Allen & Doris Schrock
Brad & Mindi Schrock
Carl & Lily Schroeder
William Schroeder
Arlys Schwabauer
Fern Schweitzer
Kenneth & Kathryn Seitz
Lester Shank
Orval & Dorothy Shank
Virginia Sharp
Donald & Jewell Shenk
Michael & Margaret Shenk
Miriam Shenk
Nelson Shenk
Luther & Geneva Shetler
Ora & Marilyn Shetler
Dorothy Shirk
Arlin & Esther Shisler
Kirk & Mary Ann Shisler
Marie Shisler
Loren & Vesta Shoemaker
Arthur & Velma Shoup
Brian & Lisa Showalter
Dennis & Sharon Showalter
Sam & Jan Showalter
Stuart & Shirley Showalter
Carl & Dinah Siebert
Marvin & Katherine Siebert
Merle & Florence Siebert
Silverwood Mennonite Women In Mission
Thomas Skayhan
Beatrice Slabach
Eric Slagel
Rebecca Slough
Walter Smeltzer
John & Joann Smith
Margaret Smith
Arthur & Nova Smoker
George & Barbara Smucker
Jeanne Smucker
Marcus Smucker
Mark & Vicki Smucker
Allene Smucker-Klassen
Alice Snyder
Don Snyder
Harold & Lyla Snyder
James & Susan Sommer
Wayne & Joanne Sommer
Elvin Souder
Gerald & Marian Souder
Wayne & Joanne Speigle
David Sperry
Michael & Patricia Spory
Elmo Springer
Randall Springer
Kent Sprunger
Merlin & Alice Sprunger
Muriel T. Stackley
Bruce & Suzanne Stauffer
James & Ruth Stauffer
Jeremy Steelberg
Gerald and Beulah Steiner
Barry & Ingrid Stoltzfus
Dale & Doris Stoltzfus
Daniel Stoltzfus
Lorna Stoltzfus
Miriam Stoltzfus
Paul & Mary Stoltzfus
Richard & Elaine Stoltzfus
Robert Stoltzfus
Ruth Stoltzfus
Victor & Marie Stoltzfus
Ken Strite
Hulda Stucky
Rodney Stucky
Ellis Stutzman
Leon Stutzman
Robert & Linda Suter
Clayton & Elsie Sutter
Earl & Margaret Sutter
Lela Sutter
David & Shelby Swartley
William Swartley
Robert & Ruth Swartz
Ed & Mary Swartzendruber
John & Kathryn Swartzendruber
Ruth Ann Swartzendruber
Thelma Swartzendruber
Warren & Jackie Swartzendruber
Melvin & Mary Swartzentruber
Melvin & Gladys Sweigart
James & Winona Swope
Everett & Barbara Thomas
Richard & Joyce Thomas
Sam Thomas
Rodney Tissue
Ora & Mary Troyer
Edith Tschetter
Ruth Unrau
Jerry & Elaine Unruh
Otis & Vera Unruh
Norman & Mary Vercler
Scott Via
Ruben & Cecilia Villegas
Virginia Mennonite Conference
Sueann VonGunten
Donald Voth
Elvera Voth
Anita Wagler
Elmer & Winifred Wall
Lenore Waltner
Lucille Waltner
Vern & Judy Warkentin
Kendal Warkentine
Richard & Carolyn Watkins
Alvin Weaver
Arthur & Esther Weaver
Barry & Marjorie Weaver
Dorothy Jean Weaver
Duane Weaver
Harold & Mary Weaver
James & Jane Weaver
James & Vera Weaver
Joseph Weaver
Richard & Margaret Weaver
Robert & Anna Mae Weaver
Robert & Jean Weaver
David & Valerie Weaver-Zercher
Elvin & Ruth Weber
Lester & Lydia Weber
Richard & Carol Weber
David & Ruth Weldy
Carol Wenger
Chester & Sara Jane Wenger
Herbert Wenger
Lowell & Aimee Wenger
Lowell & Marlene Wenger
Robert & Lena Wenger
Lloyd & Beverly Wert
West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship
Robert & Grace Whitehead
Hal Whitman
Glen & Helen Widmer
Bernie & Marie Wiebe
Linda Wiens
Karen Wolfe
Wallace & Karin Wolff
Thelma Wolgemuth
Robert Wortinger
Norma Wyse
Pauline Wyse
Richard & Erma Yaussy
John & Deborah Yeakel
Arlan & Ila Yoder
Bob Yoder
Carl & Martha Yoder
Carl & Phyllis Yoder
Carolyn Yoder
Cora Yoder
Darvin & Martha Yoder
Delvon & Shirley Yoder
Duane Yoder
Earl & Peggy Yoder
Ed & Theo Yoder
Elaine Yoder
Emil & Minerva Yoder
Gordon & Esther Yoder
Helen Yoder
John & MaDonna Yoder
Nelson & Patricia Yoder
Norman & Linda Yoder
Paul Yoder
Paul & Anita Yoder
Paul & Suzanne Yoder
Ray & Mary Yoder
Richard Yoder
Robert & Doris Yoder
Robert & Dorothy Yoder
Terry & Joan Yoder
Twila Yoder
Warren & Ruth Yoder
Wilbur & Helen Yoder
Zelda Yoder
Daryl & Marlisa Yoder-Bontrager
Alan Yordy
John & Winnie Yordy
Carolyn Yost
Lloyd Zeager
John & Betty Zehr
Marvin & Florence Zehr
Marvin & Jeannie Zehr
W J & Carolyn Zehr
Arthur & Velma Zimmerly Shoup
Norman Zimmerman
Richard & Betty Zimmerman

WORKERS

Kreider, Wayne, began a term as lead pastor at Mechanic Grove Mennonite Church, Quarryville, Pa., on Nov. 7, 2010.

OBITUARIES

Alliman, Mae Richard, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 7, 2010. Spouse: Gilbert Alliman (deceased). Parents: Noah and Anna Graber Richard. Children: June A. Yoder, Kirk G.; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Boshart, Burdette Joseph, 85, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 7, 2010. Spouse: Deloris Jean Stutzman Boshart (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Faye Stutzman Boshart. Children: Patricia Hostetler, Holly Hostetler, Carla Yeackley, Pam Wurst, Mike; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 9 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford.

Brubacher, Curtis, 93, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Nov. 24, 2010. Spouse: Alice Snider Brubacher. Parents: Menno and Almeta Good Brubacher. Children: Sanford, Maurice, Lorrie Brubacher Perlman, Ross; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 29 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Buschert, David C., 78, South Bend, Ind., and Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 1, 2010. Spouse: Joyce Stutzman Buschert. Parents: Chester and Mary Edna Snyder Buschert. Children: Beth Hooley, Jill Kennel; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 6 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Cutrell, Samuel N., 80, Lakewood, Colo., died Nov, 9, 2010. Spouse: Waneta Louise Sommers Cutrell (deceased). Parents: George W. and Frances Nissley Cutrell. Children: Sam S., Scott M.; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

Davidhizar, George Kenneth, 91, Wakarusa, Ind., died Oct. 26, 2010. Spouse: Grace Evelyn Marks Davidhizar (deceased). Parents: Fred and Nora Kehr Davidhizar. Children: Jean Griffin, Alan, Carolyn Bitikofer; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Derstine, Chester T., 91, Dublin, Pa., died Nov. 23, 2010. Spouse: Ruth L. Detweiler Derstine (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Lizzie Trauger Derstine. Children: James, David, Elaine Clemmer, Clyde; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Rockhill Mennonite Community Chapel, Sellersville, Pa.

Derstine, Ruth L. Detweiler, 91, Dublin, Pa., died Nov. 28, 2010. Spouse: Chester T. Derstine (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Lizzie Lapp Detweiler. Children: James, David, Elaine Clemmer, Clyde; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Rockhill Mennonite Community Chapel, Sellersville, Pa.

Ellsworth, Evelyn Mae Short, 88, West Unity, Ohio, died Nov. 16, 2010. Parents: Elmer and Jeanette Yoder Short. Children: Lawrence Rudnicki, Jeanette Ronwinski, Connie Todorowski, Dennis Rudnicki, Tad Rudnicki; 16 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Short Funeral Home, Archbold, Ohio.

Goerzen, Milton, 85, Goessel, Kan., died Nov. 4, 2010. Spouse: Alice Reimer Goerzen. Parents: Jacob J. and Sarah Schroeder Goerzen. Children: Larry, Jennifer Flaming, Mike, Shelley Buller; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 8 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Gross, Joe A., 90, Freeman, S.D., died Nov, 19, 2010. Spouse: Emma Walter Gross. Parents: Andrew J.C. and Mary A. Tschetter Gross. Children: Nancy Weber, Sherwin; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Kauffman, Alvin D., 96, Goshen, Ind., died Nov, 14, 2010. Spouse: Beulah Good Kauffman. Parents: Joseph and Agnes Andrews Kauffman. Children: Barbara Powell, Ruth Ann Zehr, Ralph; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Liechty, Mary Marie Zehr, 87, Leo, Ind., died Nov. 14, 2010. Spouse: Omer W. Liechty (deceased). Parents: Sam and Elizabeth Stauffer Zehr. Children: Lois Kruth, Janie Mullet, Omer, Wendy Lederach, Sherman; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at North Leo Mennonite Church.

Martin, Arthur, 83, St. Thomas, Pa., died Nov. 11, 2010. Spouse: Janet H. Lehman Martin. Parents: Adin and Elizabeth Eby Martin. Children: Ronald, Barbara Martin Miller, Robert, Bonita Martin Shelly; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Metzger, John M., 77, Kitchener, Ontario, died Nov. 22, 2010. Spouse: Doris Bast Metzger. Parents: George and Nancy Metzger. Children: Larry, Elaine Mortensen, Anita Bast, Julie Herteis; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Miller, Mary Holaway, 98, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 6, 2010, following a three-year illness. Spouse: Lester J. Miller (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Sophia Bleile Holaway. Children: Dorcas Steider, Lynford, Philip; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Nissley, Jay Howard, 49, South Bend, Ind., died Nov. 19, 2010. Parents: Homer D. and Betty Graber Nissley. Children: Jennifer Nissley, Bjorn Nissley, Jan-Dominik Nissley of Daldorf, Germany. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Schmidt, Rudolf "Rudy" H., 87, Goessel, Kan., died Oct. 27, 2010. Spouse: Nola Kremer Schmidt. Spouse: Luella Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Jacob U. and Mary Hiebert Schmidt. Children: Kathy Schmidt, Jim, Mary Ulsaker, Fred, Darrel Kremer; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Schroeder, Bertha Adina Goertz, 98, Goessel, Kan., died Aug. 11, 2010. Spouse: Herbert Schroeder (deceased). Parents: Henry F. and Martha Schmidt Goertz. Children: Mary Jones, Judy Tomlonson, Herb. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Shank, David Arthur, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 20, 2010. Spouse: Wilma E. Hollopeter Shank. Parents: Charles L. and Crissie Yoder Shank. Children: Michael, Stephen, Crissie Buckwalter, Rachel Shenk; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 25 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Skiles, Joseph, 97, Wakarusa, Ind., died Nov. 12, 2010. Spouse: Virginia Holoway Weldy Skiles. Spouse: Leona Flickinger Skiles (deceased). Parents: Daniel V. and Lean Metzger Skiles. Children: Linda Hartzell, Karen Dubow, Grace Laydon, Joan Fleck, Molly Jo Seeck; 13 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 15 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Stopher, Ruby Miller, 83, LaGrange, Ind., died Nov. 22, 2010, from complications of heart valve surgery. Spouse: Wayne Stopher. Parents: John W. and Elizabeth Miller Miller. Children: Kathleen Snider, Sheila Yoder, Regina Driver, Yvonne Stopher, Timothy; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Waltner, Welma Mae Waltner, 90, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 16, 2010. Spouse: Ray J. Waltner (deceased). Parents: Jacob P. and Mary Waltner. Children: Lynne Voth, Bill, Donna Goering, Ginny Crabb; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Wedel, Delbert A., 80, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 11, 2010. Spouse: Carol J. Stucky Wedel. Parents: Arthur A. and Elizabeth Goering Wedel. Children: Debi Brunk, Lori Graber; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Weidman, Mary Lou Mowery, 69, Landisville, Pa., died Nov. 10, 2010. Spouse: Dallas P. Weidman. Parents: John R. and Marguerite Cover Mowery. Children: Linda Blauch, John Weidman, Dallas Weidman, Carol Smith; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; step-children: Rick Weidman, Randy Boll. Memorial service: Nov. 15 at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Herald Press

Worship & Mission
AFTER CHRISTENDOM

Worship and Mission After Christendom

As Christendom weakens today, worship and mission are poised to reunite after centuries of separation. But this requires the church to rethink both "mission" and "worship." In this passionate and thoughtful study, **Alan Kreider** and **Eleanor Kreider** draw upon missiology, liturgiology, biblical studies, church history to help Christians live and witness in a world where institutional religion is no longer taken for granted.

"The old ways in the church no longer ring true. Now comes this buoyant, joyous book about new possibilities for the church as it returns to gospel basics and as it connects with the emerging world of boundary-crossing pluralism."
—Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary

2011. 276 pages.
Paper. 978-0-8361-9554-5
$19.99 USD/$22.99 CAD

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***volunteer*** to assist the maintenance department in managing and maintaining buildings, equipment and grounds; and in coordinating custodial tasks. Ideally this person can volunteer for several months or even for a year or more. Housing and a living stipend are available. To indicate interest, contact the AMBS volunteer coordinator, volunteercoordinator@ambs.edu.

Bluffton University announces ***two full-time, tenure-track faculty positions*** beginning fall 2011: Biblical Studies and Marketing & Business. Application reviews begin Jan. 17 and continue until the positions are filled. Please visit our website at www.bluffton.edu/about/employment for position responsibilities, requirements and how to submit an application. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE

Eastern Mennonite University seeks applicants for a full-time continuing ***faculty member in church, cultural and interfaith studies.*** Ideal candidate will show interest in: peacebuilding; critical engagement and affirmation with contemporary trends in Christianity and society (including, but not limited to, emergent or missional trends). Interest in local and global mission, including postcolonial critique and effects of race/ethnicity desirable. Special consideration will be given to candidates who are: simultaneously appreciative of social scientific insights and well-versed in biblical and theological studies; committed to expressing and embracing diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, faith community; interested in contributing to a generous Anabaptism committed to the nurturing of students from many faith backgrounds. Ph.D. required. Position to start Aug. 15, 2011. Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) serves many denominations, including a strong contingent of United Methodist and Mennonite churches. EMS will consider applications from these traditions and a broad range of denominations. Send vitae and cover letter to Michael A. King, Dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or e-mail Michael.king@emu.edu. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Discover South America!

Brazil & Paraguay Tour – April 2011
Rio, Curitiba, Iguazu Falls, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies

Call for special discount!

Peru & Paraguay Tour – Sept./Oct. 2011
Lima, Machu Picchu, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies, Iguazu Falls

Contact Rudolf Duerksen at 1-204-415-6836
southway@shaw.ca
www.southwaytours.com

Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic retreat ministry for families and adults in northeastern Pa., seeks ***full-time retreat center director*** with an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for building relationships and pointing people toward Christ. Will direct all aspects of daily retreat center operations (guest services/sales, communications/marketing, information systems, food service, housekeeping). Assume primary leadership when executive director is absent and report to same. Prior marketing and/or retreat/camping experience preferred. Salary, liberal benefits. Resumé: Executive Director, RR1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; Phone: 800-822-7505 x 118; Fax: 570-595-0328; E-mail: jobsrc10@spruce-lake.org (www.sprucelake.org).

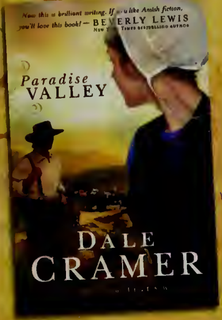
Camp Friedenswald is looking to fill two positions. ***Facilities director***: oversight of and working with groundskeeping, general maintenance, and special projects will be a large part of what is expected. An excitement for working collaboratively with others is imperative. This is a salaried position with housing, utilities, insurance and many meals provided. Please contact the executive director, Justin Weaver, for more information at justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744. ***VS position***: 9- to 12-month period; potential areas of need are IT, environmental science education, groundskeeping, mechanical work: small stipend and many meals provided. If you have interest in any of these areas please contact our operations director, Portia Amstutz, at portia@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744.

Feed the hungry and shelter the homeless with the **Winona (Minn.) Catholic Worker** community. We are seeking light-hearted, compassionate, spiritually grounded individuals to join us in doing the Works of Mercy in our small, family-style houses of hospitality. More information at www.WinonaCatholicWorker.org or PO Box 102, Winona, MN 55987.

Lovely house for sale in beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Va. Part of a farm partnership with registered herd of grass-fed Black Angus, 10 miles from EMU. For more information and pictures go to www.foresalebyowner.com listing ID 22775592 or zip code 22832. Call 540-269-4106 or e-mail brennet98@gmail.com.

Esperanza Health Center, a faith-based primary health care clinic in Philadelphia, seeks a full-time bilingual ***behavioral health consultant*** to serve as a member of the primary care provider team providing brief, immediate behavioral health support and interventions as part of integrated primary care services. LCSWs, PSYD preferred. MSWs and LSWs may apply. Refer to website for more information: www.esperanzahealth.com. Esperanza is a Christian community health center that provides clinical and preventive dental care in a dental health professional shortage area. Esperanza is currently seeking a ***dentist*** to perform the full scope of dentistry in our practice. Ability to speak Spanish is beneficial but not required. Strong interpersonal skills and a team approach to oral health care are highly valued. Refer to website for more information: www.esperanzahealth.com

Bestselling Author Dale Cramer Turns to His Amish Heritage for Inspiration


Now this is brilliant writing. If you like Amish fiction, you'll love this book! — BEVERLY LEWIS
New York Times bestselling author
Paradise VALLEY
DALE CRAMER

The son of a runaway Amishman, Dale Cramer is also a bestselling, critically acclaimed author. Growing up, Dale's life held a mix of the *Englisher* and Amish cultures, and it is here, where these two ways of life collide, that he finds inspiration for his novels.

Because his stories stem from his Amish ancestry, they captivate readers with an authenticity rarely found in Amish fiction. His new novel, *Paradise Valley*, in stores now, is a heart-wrenching tale of love and loss. Yet it also examines a very real, and very little known, piece of Amish history—a time that shaped the lives of one Amish community—and his own family—for better and for worse. Here, Dale talks about his unique family, reconnecting with his heritage, and the story he just had to tell.

Growing up, you had such close ties to the Plain people. Do you have a favorite memory of your Amish relatives?

I always loved staying at Uncle Jake's place when I was little. He had a big farm, a dozen kids, and all manner of livestock. I remember helping with chores, hunting with my cousins, riding horses and milking cows. They had a remarkable sense of humor, and sometimes we'd stay up late at night talking and telling jokes around the wood stove.

Your love for your family and its history is evident in the stories you write. What inspired your latest novel *Paradise Valley*?

I wanted to write a big story, something with passion, romance, and high stakes, where people struggle against tough circumstances. I didn't really set out to find another story based on my family, but when my father told me the story of Paradise Valley, I knew I had to write it. It's a classic adventure tale whose characters possess real honor and courage as well as a deep, genuine faith.

What was so compelling about this specific piece of your Amish ancestry?

In 1921, the state of Ohio mandated that all children attend public schools five days a week. The Amish refused because they rightly feared the effects of such constant outside influence on their children. The state ultimately arrested several of the fathers and took their kids away from them. This was why they started a colony in Mexico.

On a personal level, I knew that my father was born and raised Old Order Amish and that he was born in a colony in Mexico, but I never really knew why they were there in the first place. But what really interested me was learning that my great-grandfather was the elder statesman of the Mexican colony, and that three generations of my family lived there.

How has your family helped as you wrote *Paradise Valley*?

Without Amish family I would never have attempted any of these books—they've been a huge help. I'm in contact with several of my Amish cousins, who answer my questions and help me get the details right. My half sister was raised Old Order Amish, as was my father. My father has given me all sorts of stories about Amish life, full of details you can't make up, giving the books an unusual level of authenticity.

> "Now this is brilliant writing. If you like Amish fiction, you'll love this book!"
>
> —Beverly Lewis,
>
> *New York Times* bestselling

Speaking of your father, you tell his amazing story in your critically acclaimed novel *Levi's Will*. How does *Paradise Valley* relate to this previous Amish novel?

It's the story of the same family but a generation earlier. Levi and his first wife are part of the Mexico colony, and Will (of *Levi's Will*) is actually born there. This is a true thing. My grandfather and his first wife moved to Paradise Valley, and my father was born there. My great-grandfather, Levi's father-in-law, was the elder statesman of the colony.

With all your experience with the Amish and their history, what is one thing you really admire about them?

Their work ethic is certainly admirable, but I'd also point out that there's an innocence about them, an absence of the cynicism so pervasive in today's society. They're completely sincere.

For more on Dale Cramer, his novels, and his family, visit dalecramer.com, *and his blog at* dalecramerblog.com.

BETHANYHOUSE

Advertisement

www.bethanyhouse.com • A Division of Baker Publishing Group

It's time for a new 'young adult litany'

Peter Epp teaches Mennonite Studies at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Manitoba. He is also a member of Young Adult Fellowship.

How do we achieve better young adult networking, a louder prophetic voice and more engagement in congregations?

You won't find it at the back of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *Sing the Journey* or even *Sing the Story*, but Mennonites seem to have an official litany when it comes to young adults. It goes something like this:

Congregation: Where are all the young adults?

Leader: (insert concerned but unsure answer here)

Congregation: What are we doing for our young adults?

Leader: (insert concerned but even less sure answer here)

All together: Let us find ways to involve our young adults in church.

It's a litany we've been repeating with increasing urgency since the 1980s. With the litany nearing its 30th birthday—and thereby becoming officially older than the young adults it's concerned with—2010 seemed like a good time to take a detailed look at its questions.

Last Nov. 19-21, the Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) planning committee, of which I'm a part, met in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with four young adults from across Canada and the United States, two Mennonite Church USA staff members, one Mennonite Church Canada staff person, one MC Manitoba staff person and one MC Canada Christian Formation Council member. The two focus questions were (1) What is being done for young adult members of Mennonite Church USA and MC Canada right now? (2) What else is needed?

The answers to the first question—What's being done for young adults right now?—may surprise you. Terry Shue, Mennonite Church USA's director of leadership development, and Dave Bergen, MC Canada's executive secretary of Christian formation, seem to be consciously rewriting their part of the young adult litany. Where there once seemed to be only vague answers, they offered a detailed inventory. Bergen started by pointing out that in Canada, more money is earmarked for Mennonite colleges and camps (where young adults serve as staff) than anything else. Terry affirmed that colleges and camps receive high levels of funding in Mennonite Church USA, too, adding that he'd discovered 61 leadership initiatives and satellite young adult ministries in his research. This included grassroots organizations like Young Anabaptist Radicals (www.young.anabaptistradicals.org) and those run by Mennonite Church USA's related organizations, such as the !Explore program, facilitated by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Young adults, it would seem, have more forums for education and leadership development than was once thought.

The numbers were impressive, but there was still something missing. These ministries usually aren't connected to one another, and they clearly aren't connecting with all young adults. We need more communication, we concluded, and we need it in three key areas.

First, we need to help our young adult ministries network with one another and with the young adults they target. Second, we need more platforms for young adults to speak prophetically to their church, specifically on vital issues like diversity and cultural shift—issues that young adults are uniquely positioned to speak to. Third, we need young adults to be engaged and called. We need them participating in the mission of God, especially at the congregational level, and we need this to be facilitated by all levels of church, from the national to the local.

This is a tall order. How do we achieve better young adult networking, a louder prophetic voice and more engagement in congregations? The answer starts with the national churches. Mennonite Church USA and MC Canada, we concluded, need something tangible to spearhead this, and tangibility usually comes with budgeted resources and a designated staff person.

Does anything like this exist? YAF—who called this meeting—had been operating under this kind of mandate—but without any budget or designated staffing—for 10 years. Our initial guiding proposal was approved, but the follow-through lacked connection to and resourcing from our denominations. Participants in the Young Adult Think Tank in Winnipeg believe that we (and this means you, too) need to urge our denominations to facilitate a recognized ministry that networks the existing young adult opportunities, facilitates their prophetic voices and empowers young adults in their congregations.

We are in the process of formalizing this request to the "powers that be" but also recognize that whatever we do will require more than denominational oversight. It will also be dependent on the voices and choices of the people in the pews.

Do I hear a new litany coming on? TM

FILM REVIEWS

Inside Job (PG-13) exposes what led to the economic crisis of 2008. The global financial meltdown, at a cost of over $20 trillion, resulted in millions of people losing their homes and jobs. Through extensive research and interviews with major financial insiders, politicians and journalists, the film traces the rise of a rogue industry and unveils the corrosive relationships that have corrupted politics, regulation and academia.—*Gordon Houser*

Fair Game (PG-13) tells the true story of Valerie Plame, whose status as a CIA agent was revealed by White House officials allegedly out to discredit her husband after he wrote a 2003 *New York Times* op-ed piece saying the Bush administration had manipulated intelligence about weapons of mass destruction to justify the invasion of Iraq. Well-acted and tautly paced, this film shows how U.S. government officials misled the public in order to go to war.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEW

War, Peace and Social Conscience: Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite Ethics by Theron Schlabach (Herald Press, 2009, $39.99) locates Hershberger in the pantheon of Mennonite leaders from the "Goshen school" of Anabaptist studies in the middle part of the 20th century. According to Schlabach, the central theme of Hershberger's life is this: Do justice but do not seek justice (through activism that is coercive). Schlabach places Hershberger alongside H.S. Bender and John Howard Yoder and documents Hershberger's arguments with theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Schlabach also examines Hershberger's involvement in matters such as the labor struggles at Hesston (Kan.) Manufacturing in the 1970s and the formation of Mennonite Mutual Aid in the 1940s. This 725-page tome provides an exhaustive defense of Hershberger's rightful place in U.S. Mennonite history.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Books on trust, worship, Bible, ecology

Books engage us. They inform, challenge and often change us, for the better, we hope.

Trust: Martin Marty addresses one of the greatest needs in our world today, captured in the title of his book *Building Cultures of Trust* (Eerdmans, 2010, $22.99). He argues that "developing cultures of trust will hold more promise and can draw on the energies of more citizens if there is concentration on the building blocks of a society."

Worship: Two recent books take different approaches to worship—one Calvinist, the other Eastern Orthodox. In *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (BakerAcademic, 2009, $21.99), James K.A. Smith sees worship as a practice that trains us to love. Worship forms us as disciples who desire God's kingdom.

The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key by Vigen Guroian (Eerdmans, 2010, $14) draws on early Christian writings to see theology as music. God is "like a cantor who chants his creation into existence." Guroian sees creation as "a Trinitarian love song" and resurrection as "a triumph of communion over isolation."

Bible: For those of a more scholarly bent, two important books in biblical studies are *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination and History* by Dale C. Allison Jr. (BakerAcademic, 2010, $54.99) and *Come Out, My People: God's Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond* by Wes Howard-Brook (Orbis Books, 2010, $30).

Allison, who's been called one of the leading Jesus scholars in the world, questions some standard critical assumptions and considers collective memory in getting at a more nuanced construction of who Jesus was and what he did.

Howard-Brook looks at the Bible and world history "from the perspective of the ongoing struggle between the 'religion of empire' and the 'religion of creation.'" He sees "the Way of Jesus [as] a path that calls us out of 'empire' and into the immediately available beauty and power of the Creator God's realm of overflowing abundance." His cogent treatment of Scripture is full of insights.

Ecology: *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* by Richard Bauckham (Baylor University Press, 2010, $24.95) is a careful biblical study that overturns the typical view of human stewardship over creation and places the Genesis concept of dominion within its wider biblical context. He also looks at New Testament themes on ecology.

The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth by Thomas Berry (Orbis Books, 2009, $22) collects essays from 1987-2000 by a renowned historian of world religions and cultures. Berry presents a vision of the sacredness of the universe and the interrelatedness of the Earth community.

Literature: A pair of valuable books from Baylor University Press look at literature from different angles. *Between Truth and Fiction: A Narrative Reader in Literature and Theology*, edited by David Jasper and Allen Smith (2010, $29.95), includes excerpts from various texts—novels, poems, plays, autobiography, essays—and adds introductions, discussion questions, notes and lists for further reading. It's sure to spur readers to pursue some of the works that are excerpted.

Sacred Space: The Quest for Transcendence in Science Fiction Film and Television by Douglas E. Cowan (2010, $24.95) writes that science fiction often reflects "the quest for transcendence of human limitations." He considers such works as *Contact, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, Stargate SG-1, Babylon 5* and *Battlestar Galactica.*

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

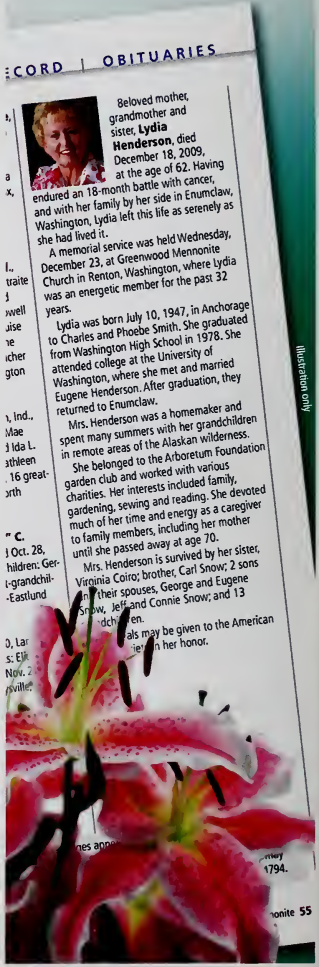
These readers submitted answers

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Marian Egli, Hopedale, Ill.
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Dianne Gehman, Mohnton, Pa.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Shirley & Lila Good, Sarasota, Fla.
Rachel Graber, Parker, S.D.
Paula Goering Harms, Rochester, Minn.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Brenda Miller, Orrville, Ohio
Crist Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Ed & Joann Miller, Bigfork, Mont.
Joe & Jane Miller, Mount Union, Pa.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Rose Moyer, Deer Creek, Okla.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Doris Nelson, Wayland, Iowa
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Anna Nolt, Quakertown, Pa.
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Junia Schmidt, Hesston, Kan.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Ethel Slabaugh, Sturgis, Mich.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Ethan Stuckey, Archbold, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Orville R Stutzman, Hesston, Kan.
Otis & Vera Unruh, North Newton, Kan.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Mary Helen Wade, Sterling, Ill.
Lenore Waltner, North Newton, Kan.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Eileen Wenger, Leola, Pa.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Elmer Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Jay & Joyce Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

TheMennonite

Now offering expanded memorial and photo insertion options.

Contact Rebecca Helmuth at
800-790-2498
for pricing information.



ECORD | OBITUARIES

Beloved mother, grandmother and sister, **Lydia Henderson**, died December 18, 2009, at the age of 62. Having endured an 18-month battle with cancer, and with her family by her side in Enumclaw, Washington, Lydia left this life as serenely as she had lived it.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, December 23, at Greenwood Mennonite Church in Renton, Washington, where Lydia was an energetic member for the past 32 years.

Lydia was born July 10, 1947, in Anchorage to Charles and Phoebe Smith. She graduated from Washington High School in 1978. She attended college at the University of Washington, where she met and married Eugene Henderson. After graduation, they returned to Enumclaw.

Mrs. Henderson was a homemaker and spent many summers with her grandchildren in remote areas of the Alaskan wilderness.

She belonged to the Arboretum Foundation garden club and worked with various charities. Her interests included family, gardening, sewing and reading. She devoted much of her time and energy as a caregiver to family members, including her mother until she passed away at age 70.

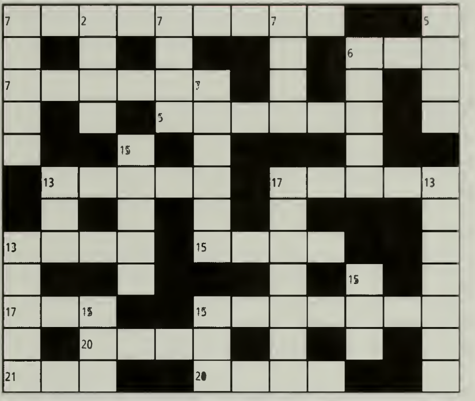
Mrs. Henderson is survived by her sister, Virginia Coiro; brother, Carl Snow; 2 sons [illegible] their spouses, George and Eugene Snow, Jeff and Connie Snow; and 13 [illegible]dchi[illegible]en.

[illegible]als may be given to the American [illegible]ie[illegible]n her honor.

Illustration only

Biblical good eats

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless noted otherwise.

ACROSS

1. The Israelites ate fish, _____, melons, leeks, onions and garlic in Egypt (plural) (Nu. 11:5).
6. Many fish came from the ___ of Galilee.
7. Isaiah 1:8 compares the Daughter of Zion to "a hut in a field of _____."
9. _____ doves were clean and used as offerings.
11. Mutton is meat from these animals.
12. Cakes were made from these palm fruits.
14. Clean beasts of burden
15. Harvest comes when the grain is _____. (Mk. 4:29)
17. One could get food and a room here, but Mary and Joseph had no room here.
19. Cakes were made from these dried grapes.
20. Pharaoh's dream first showed sleek and fat cows, then ___ and gaunt cows. (Gen. 41:3-4)
21. Only the fool says "take life easy; ___, drink and be merry." (Lk. 12).
22. Isaiah 59 cautions about eating the ___ of vipers.

DOWN

1. Matthew mentions the spices mint, dill, and _____ (one "m" spelling). Mt. 23:23
2. The fatted _____
3. The Pharisees tithed a tenth of this herb. (Lk. 11:42)
4. "In the brush they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the ___ of the broom tree." (Job 30:4)
5. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it was customary to sacrifice the Passover _____ (Mk. 14:12).
6. An inferior wheat, which was not destroyed by the plague of hail since it ripened later (Ex. 9:32)
8. The Last _____
10. When David came to Mahanaim, _____ and lentils were brought to him, among many other things. (2 Sam. 17:28)
11. "Each day one ox, ___ choice sheep and some poultry were prepared ..." (Ne. 5:18).
12. "Then, _____ the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot..." (Jn. 13:26)
13. Abigail took "two hundred loaves of bread, two ___ __ wine, five dressed sheep ..." (two words) 1 Sam. 25:18
14. Gethsemane was located in an _____ grove.
16. Olive ___ .
18. "I went down to the grove of ___ trees to look at the new growth in the valley ..." (Song of Sol. 6:11).
19. The King James Version translates spelt as this grain, now spelled with a "y" rather than an "I." (Is 28:25)

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our March 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

Feb. 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the January puzzle can be found on page 46.

RESOURCES

Ecclesiastes: Believers Church Bible Commentary by Douglas B. Miller (Herald Press, 2010, $28.99) argues that the author of this ancient book of wisdom describes a world of tragedy and chance in which good things are short-lived and where treasured things turn out to be of little worth but then advises his readers to make the most of their lives in the midst of such realities.

Prophetic Peacemaking: Selected Writings of J.R. Burkholder, edited by Keith Graber Miller (Herald Press, 2010, $27.99), is a collection of Burkholder's most prescient essays on pacifism, patriotism, public witness, Mennonite ethics, health care, stewardship, vocation, service and other issues of authentic discipleship.

Forever Family by Laurie Oswald Robinson (2010, $12.95 + $3.50 shipping) is an insider's look at the experience of foster-to-adopt parenting. Robinson describes how she and her husband found hope by discovering that emotional bonding can be as binding as biology in forging a "forever family."

A Maryknoll Book of Inspiration: Readings for Every Day of the Year, edited by Michael Leach and Doris Goodnough (Orbis Books, 2010, $25), collects insights for daily prayer and reflection from spiritual writings from Orbis Books over the past 40 years. Among the writers are Henri Nouwen, Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Merton, Mother Teresa, Jim Forest, Richard Rohr, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero and Thich Nhat Hanh.

After the Smoke Clears: The Just War Tradition and Post War Justice by Mark J. Allman and Tobias L. Winright (Orbis Books, 2010, $20) examines the period after the conflict and asks, What must be done to restore justice?

Mennonite German Soldiers: Nation, Religion and Family in the Prussian East, 1772-1880 by Mark Jantzen (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010, $38) traces the efforts of a small, pacifist Christian minority in eastern Prussia—the Mennonite communities of the Vistula River basin—to preserve their exemption from military service, based on their religious confession of faith. Jantzen is assistant professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Living Into Hope: A Call to Spiritual Action for Such a Time as This by Joan Brown Campbell (SkyLight Paths, 2010, $21.99) asserts that we have the capacity to transcend the barriers that separate us from one another.

Prynne's Island by Claralice Hanna Wolf (writers-exchange.com, 2010) is a novel of what happens over generations to a community that practices equality, honest work and loving relationships.

ENTER
Take photos?
Many voices, one goal
From confusion to comprehension
Unity walking together in the tragic gap
'09 Worship: Dennis Kaufman
'09 Illustration: Wilford D. Yoder
'09 Work, Service, Play:

Submit your photos to *The Mennonite's* photo contest!

Your work may be chosen for future publication in *The Mennonite.* For photo categories and submission instructions, go to **www.TheMennonite.org**

Submission deadline: **January 31, 2011**

Investing in hope In the name of Jesus

[Jesus] is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have the first place in everything.—Colossians 1:18.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.—Revelation 22:13

For the last year, I've been writing about First Things First in this column, a practice fueled by my desire to live by God's priorities as expressed in Scripture. Although I ostensibly finished that series in the December 2010 column, my theme for the months ahead invites one more look at "firsts" in Scripture.

This past year, as I've traveled to many parts of Mennonite Church USA, I've been looking for signs of hope. Indeed, all across the church, I've discovered people who share healing and hope for the world. Over the next year, I intend to write about the mundane as well as the extraordinary ways that I've seen people "investing" in hope, giving of themselves and their resources in the name of Christ.

In early November 2010, I participated in the fall gathering of the Gulf States Mennonite Conference. Perhaps more than any other region of our country in recent times, this one has suffered natural disaster. Ever since Hurricane Katrina struck the coast five years ago, the area has been trying to recover.

On the day that I visited Gulfhaven (Miss.) Mennonite Church, pastor Nelson Roth reported that a local agency had just helped a neighborhood woman hook up her stove for the first time since the disaster.

The congregation itself suffered greatly from the storm. Not only was the church building damaged, every household in the congregation suffered damage to their home as well. Fifty-seven people from the church have moved out of the community, seeking new life elsewhere. Last year, as though to add insult to injury, a British Petroleum well leaked 205 million gallons of oil into the Gulf, where the seafood industry is a vital part of the area's economy.

When I addressed the conference assembly about investing in hope, I asked them to share in small groups about various ways that they are investing in hope. Then I invited them to share with the entire assembly.

Within a few minutes, nine different people stood to share a variety of ways they are planting seeds of hope in different areas along the coast. People told of establishing a new Anabaptist presence in New Orleans, organizing programs for children, mentoring youth, supporting a program for rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, helping congregations find the next generation of leadership and helping a neighbor overcome drug addiction. I pray that God will prosper this act of seed planting so these efforts will bear much fruit.

What impressed me in this assembly was that these seeds are being planted in the name of Jesus, the one who imparts hope as a fruit of God's grace. Indeed, as our church's vision statement says it, "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

Look again at the Scriptures cited at the beginning of this column. I am convinced that there is no better investment in hope for the world than to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus is the beginning and the end of our Christian commitments. By giving Jesus first place in everything, we plant the seeds that eventually bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of our church communities. Hope does not arise solely from human efforts but comes to fruition by the power of the Holy Spirit. I invite you to join me in looking for ways to invest in hope as followers of Jesus. TM

There is no better investment in hope for the world than to follow Jesus Christ.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Resolve in the new year

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA will face some significant challenges in 2011. At least one will come to a head early in the new year: deciding whether to change the location of the 2013 national convention. But there are other, equally troublesome issues confronting us all.

On Jan. 7, the Executive Board will begin a three-day meeting in Tampa, Fla. On the agenda is the question of how to respond to calls for a venue change for Phoenix 2013 national convention because of Arizona's new immigration law. For months, the Executive Board has been working through a myriad of issues surrounding the decision. This careful listening has resulted in a complex of concerns. But many people will be angry no matter what the Executive Board decides.

But there are even more daunting challenges ahead for our denomination. One that will come to the forefront again—probably at the Pittsburgh 2011 convention in July—is the ongoing tension over sexuality and the church's teaching position on homosexuality.

Well-meaning people on both sides of this divide were busy in 2009 and 2010. A group of pastors in the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference sent a letter to their conference and to the Executive Board, asking that they stop activist groups such as PinkMenno from continuing to push for change in the church's teaching position (see our Dec. 1, 2009, issue). PinkMenno advocates for full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members in the church.

PinkMenno leaders and leaders of other groups working for change also spent time organizing for the Pittsburgh 2011 convention (August 2010). However, these activists may have inadvertently energized another group that is emerging.

Although not gathering to specifically address the church's teaching position on sexuality, a by-invitation-only gathering of racial/ethnic leaders in Tampa immediately after the Executive Board meeting is the first of its kind (page 6). This group will address the continuing racism many see within our church structures. An evidence: I've heard often from racial/ethnic leaders that the voices of people of color are at times discounted and ignored. Even more onerous, according to several of the racial/ethnic associate groups, is the appropriation of civil rights and justice language by LGBT activists for their cause.

Executive Board leaders are trying something new in this conflict that first hit our conventions at the 1983 convention in Bethlehem, Pa., the first gathering of General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church delegates. In an "official communique" (November 2010), moderator Ed Diller described the "conversation rooms" planned for the Pittsburgh 2011 convention.

"The Conversation Room will be a special place for listening and conversation," Diller said. "We invite individuals or groups in that room to engage in specific conversations about … health care, immigration, sexuality and human trafficking."

This is new, and we encourage participants attempting to push the church in one direction or another to take a step back. One way to do so is to respect the arrangement for conversation at our national gathering. If participants do this, it may actually be possible to discover what it means to agree and disagree in love.

Now that's a new year's resolution.*—ejt*

It may actually be possible to discover what it means to agree and disagree in love.

Why is this issue wrapped in plastic?

Our printer failed to insert the *AMBS Window* in our December 2010 issue. Because Bluffton (Ohio) University had already reserved the insert space in this issue, the printer, at no additional expense to us, agreed to polybag this issue and include the *AMBS Window* with it. *—Editor*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN
JAN 26 2011

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002733 1

On a different track

February 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:
- Reflections on homelessness
- A long life of witness and service
- Confessions of a modern-day pacifist
- Rethinking the prosperity gospel
- Class conflict in the movies
- Editorial: Mennonites and alcohol

Mennonite
Church
USA

Create a legacy of hope

An end-of-life gift designated for Mennonite Church USA can provide tools that cultivate:

... a more vibrant witness to the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.
... growth toward the biblical vision of being one people from all tribes, languages, peoples and nations gathered together by Jesus.
... the nurture and training of leaders from within our midst.
... stronger connections to the global body of Christ.

Your gift will support the following churchwide ministries:

- Mennonite Mission Network (66%)
- Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (15%)
- Mennonite Education Agency (14%)
- Mennonite Publishing Network (3%)
- Racial/Ethnic Constituency Groups (2%)

For information about creating your legacy of hope, contact Mennonite Foundation, an affiliate of Everence Financial (formerly MMA).
Call toll-free 1-800-348-7468 or visit online www.everence.com

TheMennonite February 2011 | Volume 14, Number 2

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN
JAN 26 2011

CONTENTS

12 **On a different track**
—Joanna Shenk

17 **Reflections on homelessness**
—San Jin Choi

20 **A long life of witness and service**
—Susan Miller Balzer

23 **Still dreaming**
—Glen Alexander Guyton

27 **Confessions of a modern-day pacifist**
—Lisa Schirch

30 **Reclaim the wisdom of Hans Denck**
—Ruth Anne Abraham

37 **Phoenix in 2013 but with satellite option**
—Anna Groff

38 **90 leaders of color gather in Tampa**—Sarah Thompson

42 **'Mennonite rabbi' shares learnings**—Anna Groff

44 **Major changes at Mennonite Central Committee**—Will Braun

46 **Binational organizations balance national dynamics**—Anna Groff

49 **Remembering Glen Lapp, killed MCC worker**
—Marla Pierson Lester

50 **Mennonite farmer travels to North Korea**
—Paul Boers

53 **Vietnamese Mennonites lose church center**
—Luke S. Martin

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
54 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

ON THE COVER: Photo by Vada Snider

TheMennonite
February 2011 | Volume 14, Number 2

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016
fax: 574-535-6050

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Force public to pay for war

I was intrigued by the "$10.40 for Peace" article in the December 2010 issue. I applaud the intent and motivation behind this initiative. But I actually want my war taxes to increase. I believe the best way to end our nation's preoccupation with war is to make all citizens pay for it.

For too many Americans, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are abstract realities that don't directly impact us. If we were forced to pay for these wars—and pay for them now—support would evaporate and the public would demand they be brought to an end.

I'd like to see a specific war tax added directly to the federal tax return. This could be accomplished by adding 2 percent, 5 percent or some other percent directly to everyone's federal tax liability. For many of us, instead of receiving a tax refund we would now have to submit an extra payment to the federal government to pay for the two wars we're engaged in. That would get the public's attention, and we as a society would begin to think twice about the value of war. Maybe then we'd be willing to finally give peace a chance. *—Daniel Grimes, Goshen, Ind.*

Winery in Virginia

Regarding "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January): Curt Hartman might use some of the profit from his winery in support of the local agency for the treatment of alcoholics. Beverage alcohol's dirty little secret is that some people cannot handle it. In a review of the book *Pastoral Care of Alcohol Abusers,* the January issue of *Interpretation* reports that "the incidence of alcohol abuse and dependency has risen to nearly 20 percent of the American population."*—Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

The editors of *The Mennonite* must be scraping the bottom of the barrel to devote a full page in our church paper to a winery ("Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia," January). Wineries may have their place, but I don't think it's in *The Mennonite*. Surely you could have used a full page in our church paper to tell us something important about our Christian world instead of using it as an ad for a winery. Many stories could be written about Mennonite couples doing important work in the church world.*—Jay Lehman, Kidron, Ohio*

I realize that many Mennonites drink alcohol, but I was disappointed that the official Mennonite periodical now promotes it. Proverbs 20:1 is still true: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."*—Mervin Swartzentruber, Goshen, Ind.*

I was very disappointed to read an article in the January issue expressing a positive attitude toward the use of alcohol. Those who claim that using alcohol is more biblical forget that the Israelites had a cultural taboo against drunkenness. Our culture assumes and encourages getting drunk, especially among young adults. According to Galatians 5, drunkenness excludes people from the kingdom of God and is opposed to the fruit of the Spirit.

Innumerable lives have been ruined by using alcohol, compared with no one ever being harmed in any way by not using it. I encourage everyone who reads this to use no alcohol.*—Larry Evers, Wayland, Iowa*

Phoenix decision

I am very disappointed with the Executive Board's decision to hold Convention 2013 in Phoenix (page 37). As a Hispanic Mennonite (and immigrant), I feel sad because of the lack of solidarity and understanding from our Mennonite Church USA leadership. This is a sad moment, and I feel we are leaving out a small but important part of Christ's body.—*Samuel Lopez, New Holland, Pa.*

Chloe's friends say thanks

Thank you for the December 2010 article regarding Chloe Weaver's death and the wonderful photo from her time at Hesston (Kan.) College. Those of us who are part of the La Jara (Colo.) Mennonite Voluntary Service unit continue to mourn her loss from our midst.

Chloe was very much a part of the energy and excitement already building around the unit's anticipated relocation to Alamosa, Colo. The outpouring of contributions to this project has significantly helped fund the renovations needed to make this move a reality. We have also cherished the many calls, letters, e-mails, and prayers sent our way from all around the country over these past weeks. The sense of the broader church community upholding us here—along with Chloe's family and her many friends elsewhere—has truly sustained us as we move forward with our life and mission in this place.—*Alice M. Price, MVS coordinator, La Jara, Colo.*

Quilts not used to guide slaves

Dorothy Logan made a beautiful quilt containing rich symbolism for African-American experience ("The Underground Railroad Story in Quilts," January). However, I wish she had pointed out that the book that is the origin of her work, *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts* by Ozella McDaniel Williams, has no historical validity except for a whimsical Williams family tradition. Quilts were not used in this way to guide escaped slaves North. Google the title of the book to become acquainted with the discussion. Many well-intentioned legends circulate about the Underground Railroad, and this is one of them.—*Ervin Beck Goshen, Ind.*

Logan responds

I am aware of the varying views and interpretations of *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and The Underground Railroad*. I am also aware that there are other scholars who dispute the argument that the account is a "whimsical" story.

Black history has been passed down orally and is seldom found in written form. The underground railroad existed and was used by black slaves to escape to free states in the North. And there were symbols and places that aided many people to pursue freedom in spite of many struggles.

When I first read about the tradition of symbols Ozella McDaniel Williams received orally from her family and the meaning of those symbols embedded in quilts placed along the underground railroad, I understood I'd found a story begging me to help give it voice.

The Underground Railroad Sampler was recommended to the Troy University Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Ala., and later donated to the museum as a permanent acquisition on June 23, 2010.—*Dorothy Logan, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Peace churches work at roots

In "Is the Mennonite Church a Peace Church?" (January) Robert K. Zani wrote: "The first order of things is to name the problem. To date, no religious faith has taken on this enormous subject for what it is. Although some, including Mennonites, have done so piecemeal."

Zani also wrote: "Since the Mennonite church has longstanding credentials as a peace church and has from time

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Sharon Kennel is a remarkable woman (page 12). While farming with her husband she received many nudges about becoming a pastor. Instead, she became a conference minister—a "pastor to pastors"—with no pastoral experience of her own to help her.

Nearly a year ago, Pastor San Jin Choi followed the Spirit's leading in another direction; he spent 30 days with homeless people in various cities and offers what he learned from them.

This issue of *The Mennonite* is the first one in more than 20 years that will not be read onto cassette tapes for those who subscribe in that way. This is because the volunteer who has done the reading, 91-year-old Martha Graber, is retiring (page 20). We thank you, Martha.

In observance of Black History Month, Mennonite Church USA staff member Glen Guyton (page 23) again asks, Where are we Mennonites going? as he did at the end of his February 2010 article. Guyton also reflects on his involvement in the decision to hold the 2013 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Phoenix.

The news section begins with a report from the Executive Board meeting where the original decision was reviewed and affirmed (page 37).

We also publish two longer pieces analyzing changes at Mennonite Central Committee (page 44) and challenges faced by binational organizations serving Mennonite constituencies in both Canada and the United States (page 46).—*Editor*

Soto Albrecht nominated for moderator-elect

WHITERIVER, Ariz.—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht has been nominated for the position of Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect by the Leadership Discernment Committee (LDC). The delegate assembly will vote on this nomination at Pittsburgh 2011.

"The LDC is excited to nominate Elizabeth Soto Albrecht to the position of moderator-elect for the leadership qualities and gifts she will bring to guiding MC USA as a whole," says Duncan Smith, chair of the Leadership Discernment Committee.

This is the second time LDC approached Soto Albrecht for this position. The first time was not the right time for her, due to work and family commitments. When the LDC approached her again in September 2010, Soto Albrecht said she felt a true calling.

"[The question] would not let me go," she says. "I embrace this nomination as a calling from God ... with much joy and fear."

Soto Albrecht, originally from Puerto Rico, serves as a member of the Executive Board and works as coordinator of field education and consultant for cross-cultural seminar trips at Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary. She also serves as associate chaplain at Women & Babies Hospital in Lancaster. A member of Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, she is married to Frank Albrecht and has two children. She is the author of *Family Violence: Reclaiming a Theology of Nonviolence*.—*Anna Groff*

Bluffton insurers liable in 2007 bus crash

GOSHEN, Ind.—On Dec. 28, 2010, the Supreme Court of Ohio ruled on a case pertaining to a March 2, 2007, bus crash in Atlanta that caused the death of five members of the Bluffton (Ohio) University baseball team. The *Toledo Blade* reported the decision in its Dec. 29, 2010, issue.

"In a 5-2 decision released Tuesday," Erica Blake wrote, "the Supreme Court ruled that the university's insurance policies extend coverage to those affected. ... The ruling means that as much as $21 million more in insurance money will be available to pay claims."

On Jan. 4, *The Mennonite* contacted Robin Bowlus, Bluffton University's director of public relations, for a response to the court's decision.

"We are not commenting on this issue," said Bowlus, "as it is a judicial matter."

According to an article by Doug Lederman in the Jan. 4 issue of *Inside Higher Ed*, the ruling appears to broaden responsibility for school travel.

"Campus officials have typically been able to rest assured that if they send athletes or other students off on rented buses or other vehicles," said Lederman, "most liability ... of a serious accident would fall to the transportation providers' own insurance. ... [The] ruling last week by Ohio's highest court challenges that assumption for colleges in that state."
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Larry Bartel

In good hands

The nursing program at Hesston (Kan.) College was granted reapproval by the Kansas State Board of Nursing at a Dec. 13-14, 2010, meeting in Topeka.
—*Hesston College*

Tucson congregation touched by shooting

GOSHEN, Ind.—None of the members of Shalom Mennonite Church in Tucson, Ariz., was present at the Jan. 8 shooting that killed six people and injured 14 others, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. But Shalom's pastor, Bryce Miller, says the tragedy affected the congregation in other ways.

"Tucson is a small town," Miller said on Jan. 11, "... with many interconnecting circles. While our membership is ... distant from the Safeway [grocery store] where the shootings happened, most of us are represented by Congresswoman Giffords, and we have had various professional contacts with the congressional staff and the others who were killed. Our congregation was able to request that the Congresswoman write a letter in support of a visa application for a [Mennonite Voluntary Service] volunteer from our sister church in Bogotá, Colombia, which proved helpful."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Friesen rides through 48 states for MDS

LITITZ, Pa.—Nov. 18, 2010, was the final day of Neal Friesen's epic journey zigzagging through 48 states, riding 10,019 miles in 173 days, averaging 80 miles per day and raising $5,068 for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

Friesen, 27, a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College and a member of Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., made the decision last May 21 to voluntarily leave his job as resident director at Hesston (Kan.) College.

"Rather than disappearing on my bike for six months, I wanted to take this opportunity to make an impact while doing something I love," he says.

Kristian Anderson

Nebraska church organizes 'flash mob' in mall

A "flash mob" organized by First Mennonite Church of Lincoln, Neb., filled the food court of nearby Gateway Mall with the sound of hundreds of voices singing "Angels We Have Heard on High" in four-part harmony on Dec. 18, 2010. The event was inspired by the popular "Christmas Food Court Flash Mob, Hallelujah Chorus" video on YouTube. A flash mob is group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual act for a brief time, then disperse.—*First Mennonite*

While funding his ride from his personal savings account and with some help from strangers, Friesen stopped at some local Mennonite churches using the "Mennonite Your Way Directory" along his route. "I've met a lot of really great people," says Friesen.

During the last six months, Friesen documented his journey on his website (cyclemds.org), which is linked to his blog, "Cycle MDS."—*MDS*

MEA discusses collaboration ideas

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) brought together 30 representatives from Mennonite educational institutions, conferences and church administrative offices Oct. 27-29, 2010, in Middlebury, Ind., to discuss possibilities for collaboration among Mennonite higher education institutions. Four outside resource people provided content and structure for the consultation with the working title Mennonite Learning Network. MEA covered the costs for the consultation with the assistance of individual donors and a $5,520 grant from the Elkhart (Ind.) County Community Foundation.

The participants divided themselves into four groups and developed action plans and timelines for each of the following areas: online courses for intersessions, summers and general education; Anabaptist concerns/peace studies collaboration; shared services (learning management systems, help desk, etc.) and language exchanges and new/shared degrees.—*MEA*

Volunteers needed at Elkhart building site

ELKHART, Ind.—Opportunities exist for volunteers with various skill levels to help with the construction of Mennonite Church USA's office building in Elkhart between now and this fall. Those directing the building project hope to save $275,000 through the participation of hundreds of volunteers. Volunteers with general carpentry and masonry skills (ages 18 and up) are needed. Local volunteers can help with hosting. Also, youth groups (ages 14-18) and adults (18 and up) are needed to help with site cleanup.

To follow the construction process or learn about volunteer opportunities, see www.mennoniteusa.org/joiningtogether.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Three charges filed in death of Chloe Weaver

NEWTON, Kan.—Three charges have been filed against the 16-year-old driver of a truck that struck and killed Chloe Weaver, 20, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker, on Oct. 24, 2010. She was riding her bicycle near Alamosa, Colo. After the accident, the driver did not stop, the report said. He has been charged with criminally negligent homicide (auto involved), leaving the scene of a crash that resulted in death, and careless driving resulting in death. The first two charges are felonies, and the third is a class one traffic misdemeanor.

A preliminary hearing was set for Jan. 24, and a plea agreement is likely, says Herm Weaver, Chloe's father and conference minister for Mountain States Mennonite Conference.

Weaver says students at nearby schools have been wearing wristbands in memory of Chloe. "This is a deep moment of truth for us," he says. "We are not in a hurry to move on from here, so we are often still and simply present in this time and space."
—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Kraybill named president emeritus of AMBS

ELKHART, Ind.—J. Nelson Kraybill, who served as president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., from 1997 to 2009, was named president emeritus by the AMBS board of directors. Kraybill currently serves on the pastoral team at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart.—*AMBS*

Habits of peace, habits of violence

Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

While substitute teaching at a middle school recently, I noticed a leather coaster with a quote from Aristotle on it: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." Might the same be true of peacemaking? And of violence?

I can easily think of my own "bad" habits—the ones that do violence to myself, my friends or my community: talking before thinking, losing patience, muttering unkind words to people who don't drive like I think they should, and there are many more. Perhaps you can think of your own habits of violence.

As a society, we are so well-schooled in habits of violence that we often don't notice them: We're caught up in consuming goods made with exploited labor. We put toxic chemicals into our bodies and our land. We go through our days with attitudes of entitlement, apathy or aggression. We allow racism, sexism, child abuse and poverty to continue unchallenged.

Warmaking is an intentional cultivation of violence that wounds not only the bodies but also the souls of soldiers and officers. Psychologists describe some war veterans as suffering from "moral injury" when they witness or commit acts of violence.

We are what we repeatedly do. Peace, then, is not an act but a habit.

In light of these deeply rooted habits of violence, it's a relief to read Isaiah 2:

> *Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." ... They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

God's teaching will someday bring about the transformation of people and our tools. What a glorious future to look forward to!

And Jesus comes along proclaiming this same peaceable kingdom. At the beginning of his ministry in the Gospel of Matthew, he says,

> *You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

We can't help but wonder, How is this possible? We may imagine we're to accomplish this love of our enemies through great personal effort—as we're expected to accomplish other tasks in our lives. This is discouraging.

Such self-sufficiency in loving our enemies is impossible since we are all broken and sinful people. We are constantly falling off the wagon of recovery from our own habits of violence. But Jesus' command to love perfectly is just the start of his teaching.

Later in his ministry, things get more and more difficult for him and his disciples. As he sees that his death is coming near, Jesus tries to boil it all down for his friends. In all four Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples, Do this: eat this bread, drink this wine, wash each other's feet. Make this a habit. Let it become part of who you are. Let it become a habit of peace for you.

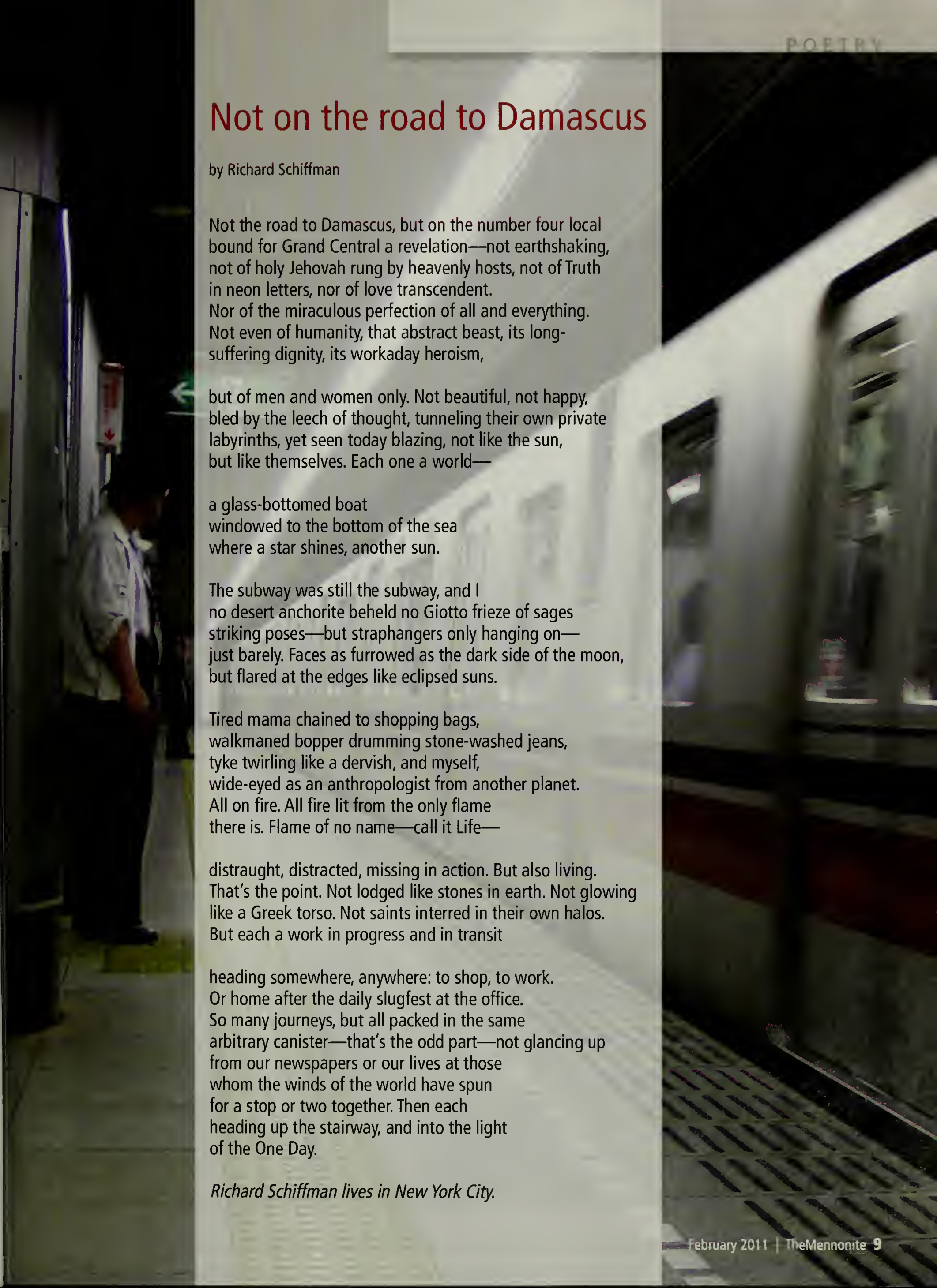
Sharing bread and cup and washing feet are not the only habits of peace Jesus advises. But they are defining habits; they show peace as the will of God and the heart of Jesus' gospel.

To revise Aristotle's quote, we might say, "We are what we repeatedly do. Peace, then, is not an act but a habit."

Fortunately, I can think of a few of my peaceful habits, too: riding my bike to get around town, showing kindness to neighbor kids who stop to feed my chickens, taking time to pray.

What are your peaceful habits? The new book *Seasoned with Peace* (Mennonite Press, Inc.) gives daily suggestions for prayers and activities that could become habits of peace, too.

And no matter how well-trained we are in the habits of violence—personally, locally, nationally or globally—we can confess our brokenness, our complicity, our apathy, and try again at cultivating habits of peace. TM



Not on the road to Damascus

by Richard Schiffman

Not the road to Damascus, but on the number four local
bound for Grand Central a revelation—not earthshaking,
not of holy Jehovah rung by heavenly hosts, not of Truth
in neon letters, nor of love transcendent.
Nor of the miraculous perfection of all and everything.
Not even of humanity, that abstract beast, its long-
suffering dignity, its workaday heroism,

but of men and women only. Not beautiful, not happy,
bled by the leech of thought, tunneling their own private
labyrinths, yet seen today blazing, not like the sun,
but like themselves. Each one a world—

a glass-bottomed boat
windowed to the bottom of the sea
where a star shines, another sun.

The subway was still the subway, and I
no desert anchorite beheld no Giotto frieze of sages
striking poses—but straphangers only hanging on—
just barely. Faces as furrowed as the dark side of the moon,
but flared at the edges like eclipsed suns.

Tired mama chained to shopping bags,
walkmaned bopper drumming stone-washed jeans,
tyke twirling like a dervish, and myself,
wide-eyed as an anthropologist from another planet.
All on fire. All fire lit from the only flame
there is. Flame of no name—call it Life—

distraught, distracted, missing in action. But also living.
That's the point. Not lodged like stones in earth. Not glowing
like a Greek torso. Not saints interred in their own halos.
But each a work in progress and in transit

heading somewhere, anywhere: to shop, to work.
Or home after the daily slugfest at the office.
So many journeys, but all packed in the same
arbitrary canister—that's the odd part—not glancing up
from our newspapers or our lives at those
whom the winds of the world have spun
for a stop or two together. Then each
heading up the stairway, and into the light
of the One Day.

Richard Schiffman lives in New York City.

Food pantries that let their clients shop waste less food

Most of us choose our food from a grocery or wherever we shop. But those who must go to a food pantry or other source for food usually have to accept what they're given.

A growing number of food pantries, however, now let their clients shop for their food. In "Let People Shop" (*Christianity Today*, December 2010), Charles Honey writes about one such pantry, Journey's End Ministries in Newcomerstown, Ohio.

Volunteers had been used to giving clients a preboxed three-day supply of food when they came in. Now they give them a grocery cart and let them choose their food from the pantry's shelves.

The volunteers struggled with the risk this involved, but they needn't have worried. Janet Gore, Journey's End director, says: "The poor have a lot of pride. They take what they need."

"Far from depleting its stocks," Honey writes, "Journey's End has seen its cost per person drop as well as a sixfold increase in users since switching to client choice in 2008." Giving the clients dignity, Gore says, "made it much more comfortable for them to shop."

Advocates of this growing philosophy say it enables pantries to feed more people and waste less food.

Honey quotes John Arnold, executive director of Feeding America West Michigan and a leading proponent of client-choice, who says that this practice not only reduces thrown-out food but reflects biblical principles. "There's no admonishment in Scripture about being overly generous to people who need it," he says.

Feeding America's 200 food banks (suppliers to food pantries) serve 37 million people, including 14 million children—an increase of 46 percent since 2006, writes Honey.

While the numbers of those needing food grow, so does the need to optimize the food you have, says Ross Fraser, spokesman for Feeding America. "There's no point giving uncooked pasta to someone who's homeless and doesn't have the means to cook it."

"Arnold contends that hunger could be conquered if surplus foods were more efficiently delivered," writes Honey. He points out that 6 billion pounds of produce is wasted each year in the United States.

While such charity programs as food pantries do much to help those in need, they "provide only a fraction of the food provided by federal programs such as school lunch and food stamps," says David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World.

"We can't food-bank our way to the end of hunger," says Beckmann. "Christian people need to change the politics of hunger as well." —*Gordon Houser*

The rich get richer

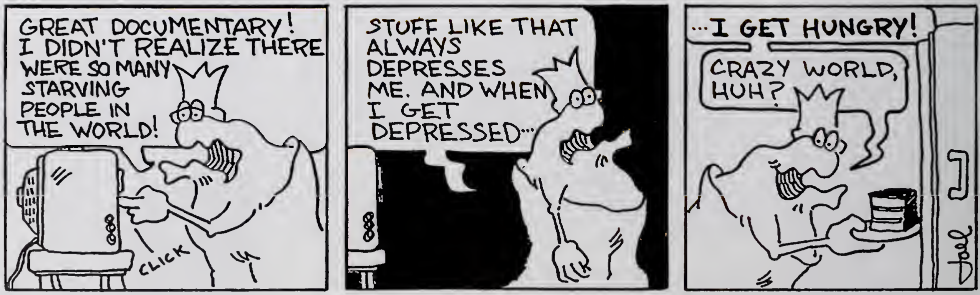
According to *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* by Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson: "Over the last generation, more and more of the rewards of growth have gone to the rich and superrich. The rest of America, from the poor through the upper middle class, has fallen further and further behind."

Last year was a terrific year for those at the very top, writes *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert. Hacker and Pierson note in their book that investors and executives at the nation's 38 largest companies earned a total of $140 billion —a record.

The investment firm Goldman Sachs realized profits of $13.4 billion and paid its employees an average of nearly $500,000 per person in total compensation.—*New York Times*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


GREAT DOCUMENTARY! I DIDN'T REALIZE THERE WERE SO MANY STARVING PEOPLE IN THE WORLD!
CLICK
STUFF LIKE THAT ALWAYS DEPRESSES ME. AND WHEN I GET DEPRESSED...
...I GET HUNGRY!
CRAZY WORLD, HUH?
Joel

> "There's nothing more radical, nothing more revolutionary, nothing more subversive against injustice and oppression than the Bible. If you want to keep people subjugated, the last thing you place in their hands is a Bible."—*Desmund Tutu in September 2008*

Take from the poor, give to the rich

The newly launched Conference of National Black Churches criticized Congress on Dec. 9, 2010, for linking extension of unemployment benefits to tax cuts for the wealthy. "Based on our prophetic responsibility to speak to those in power on behalf of the poor, underserved and vulnerable, we find it utterly shameful that those who insisted that the deficit be reduced, now celebrate billions of dollars being added to the deficit as tax cuts for the wealthy," wrote the Rev. W. Franklyn Richardson, chairman of the umbrella group of nine historically black denominations.—*Religion News Service*

70%

Chinese Christians who are women
—*Christianity Today*

Billionaires who give to charity

- Number of billionaires in the world: **1,011**
- Percentage of billionaires living in the United States: **40**
- As of Aug. 24, 2009, number of living people who had given $1 billion or more to charity: **14**
- Number of these who were still billionaires after giving: **11**
- As of Aug. 4, 2010, number of U.S. billionaires and near-billionaires pledging at least 50 percent of their wealth to charity: **40**—*Yes! Magazine*

More or less government?

Many Americans say they want a more limited federal government, yet when asked about specific activities, the majority want more or the same amount of federal involvement, not less, according to a study by the *Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation and Harvard University. For example, 61 percent of those surveyed wanted more federal government involvement in protecting the environment, and 23 percent wanted the same amount. And despite complaints about federal health-care reform, 52 percent wanted more government involvement in ensuring access to health care, and 15 percent wanted the same amount. Only 21 percent wanted less government involvement. Majorities of those surveyed also wanted more or the same amount of federal involvement in promoting values and morality, reducing poverty, setting educational standards, regulating Wall Street, fighting terrorism and regulating gun ownership.—*Wichita Eagle*

Students with credit cards

- Percentage of parents who say their college student child has a credit card: **35**
- Percentage of college students who say they have a credit card: **49**—*Yes! Magazine*

Lutheran leader seeks Communion agreement with Pope by 2017

The president of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Munib Younan, is calling on Lutherans and Catholics to issue a common statement on Holy Communion to mark the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017. "Our intention is to arrive at 2017 with a common Roman Catholic-Lutheran declaration on Eucharistic hospitality," he said, which means that Catholics would be able to receive Communion at Lutheran worship services, and Lutherans would be able to do the same at a Catholic Mass.—*Religion News Service*

The more you doubt your beliefs, the harder you preach them to others

Classic research has suggested that the more people doubt their own beliefs the more, paradoxically, they are inclined to proselytize in favor of them. David Gal and Derek Rucker published a study in *Psychological Science* in which they presented some research subjects with evidence that undermined their core convictions. The subjects who were forced to confront the counterevidence went on to more forcefully advocate their original beliefs, thus confirming the earlier findings.
—*New York Times*

9 ways to support families

1. **Safeguard our homes**
2. **Create jobs**
3. **Protect vulnerable family members**
4. **Balance work and life**
5. **Give kids a break**
6. **Protect our health**
7. **Tax fairly**
8. **Protect our future**
9. **Support marriage**

—*Yes! Magazine (www.yesmagazine.org)*

Sharon Kennel of Shickley, Neb., laughed when she was approached by two people in 1999 about becoming a conference minister in what was then Iowa-Nebraska Conference of the former Mennonite Church. “I laughed because I thought this was such an unlikely idea.”

Sharon Kennel, newly retired conference minister, reflects o

haron and Cecil Kennel in their cornfield Photo by Vada Snider

er journey of ministry

On a different track

by Joanna Shenk

After all, Sharon did not have many of the credentials expected for conference leadership. She had not pastored a church, she had not been to seminary, and she was not a man. There had never been a female conference minister in Iowa-Nebraska Conference.

"Women are often on a different track," says Florence Schloneger of North Newton, Kan., Sharon's accountability partner and friend. "Gifts were called out of Sharon even though she was not on the usual path to conference leadership."

In her early 20s, Sharon recognized a deep desire in herself "to be the kind of person others could come to for counsel, comfort and encouragement." She remembers, "I even started to collect materials to use in sermons and during my Bible reading would note passages that could be used for sermons."

In her 30s, she continued to feel called to this ministry but believed her geographical location would not allow for its realization. "My husband, Cecil, was farming on the land he grew up on, and it seemed there was no chance of moving anywhere else so I could be in ministry," she says.

One of the older men in the congregation, with tears running down his cheeks, said, 'God told me to talk to you, and I'm not sure why.'

Nonetheless, the track Sharon followed, or created, included various ministry leadership roles. She worked with the Women's Mission and Service Commission in different capacities, served on the Leadership Committee for Iowa-Nebraska Conference, facilitated pastor and spouse retreats and led the Nebraska Pastor's Cluster.

More than once, in these various contexts, people asked Kennel whether she had considered pursuing formal ministry.

She remembers disking corn ground one spring and crying out to God from the tractor cab: "God, people keep telling me I should be in ministry. That seems impossible, so what do I do? Why do they say that if that isn't your purpose for me?"

But indeed it was God's purpose.

After receiving nudges to consider the conference minister role, Sharon asked God for a specific sign one Sunday morning. She prayed that someone in her home congregation, Salem Mennonite Church of Shickley, Neb., would tap her on the shoulder and affirm her gifts.

She says, "I released that prayer and didn't think of it again until after the service, when someone tapped me on the shoulder—literally. I turned around and there was one of the older men in the congrega- ▶

tion with tears running down his cheeks. He said, 'God told me to talk to you, and I'm not sure why.' "

The man, chair of the Sunday Evening Planning Committee, asked Sharon to teach a series of Bible studies on Sunday evenings, which was something only the pastor had done previously.

"As I remembered my prayer earlier in the morning, the tears flowed from my eyes, and I told him he was an answer to prayer," Sharon says.

It was a struggle to get pastors to come between the Mississippi and the Rockies.

Given what felt like an unlikely call, Sharon kept looking for affirmation in unlikely places. At Salem she found that five of the oldest men in the congregation were her strongest supporters. This felt significant, she says, since the congregation was not of one mind about women in leadership.

In March 2000, Sharon began her role with Iowa-Nebraska Conference, and in April of the same year was licensed for ministry as a pastor to pastors. Two years later, on June 15, 2002, she was ordained at the annual meeting of the Central Plains Conference, which was created in June 2001 by the merging of Northern District (of the former General Conference Mennonite Church) and Iowa-Nebraska Conference.

Sharon participates in the licensing of Karen Dalke, pastor at Des Moines (Iowa) Mennonite Church.
Photo provided

Engaging a new role

Sharon's conference role brought changes on the Kennels' farm, where she and Cecil worked together in the fields. But it was no surprise to Cecil that his spouse was moving into a ministry role. Prior to Sharon receiving any formal calls to ministry, he had recognized her gifts.

"A number of years ago, before I was called into this ministry, Cecil told me he felt his calling was to support me in the ministry God had for me," Sharon says. "I was overwhelmed by that thought and never imagined what would be asked of him."

Marlin Kym of Moundridge, Kan., former moderator of Central Plains Conference, says Cecil was "supportive and encouraging" and would travel with Sharon as much as possible.

Denton Jantzi, pastor of Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kan., whom Sharon interviewed during his ordination process, says he thought Cecil was different from other Nebraska men in the way that he released Sharon to pursue her call.

Sharon says: "He was home alone a lot during my 10 years with the conference and became adept at preparing tasty meals for himself. He even bought himself a vacuum cleaner, since he didn't like mine," she adds, laughing.

Due to the widespread geographical distance of Central Plains Conference, Sharon was on the road quite a bit. She spent up to about half her time navigating the conference's span—1,000 miles east to west and 400 miles north to south. Her closest congregation was 47 miles away.

She also traveled monthly to Lincoln, Neb., to meet with her accountability partner and friend, Florence Schloneger. Both women lived an hour from Lincoln and worked in different conferences. When they started meeting, Schloneger and her husband were co-pastoring First Mennonite Church of Beatrice, Neb., in Western District Conference.

"Sharon was in high demand," Schloneger says. "People trusted her."

Furthermore, Sharon was able to balance family life and work. She continued working on the farm during planting season and harvest, and wrestled through difficult situations with loved ones.

Jantzi says: "She was willing to face and embrace the challenges in her work and family life and learn from them. She loved people through the difficulty."

As a female conference minister, Sharon at times faced resistance in her work. She recalls that at one regularly occurring pastors' meeting a certain man would pray only for the men at the table. "He did that often enough," Sharon says, "that three or four men who noticed would jump right in and pray for me."

Another male pastor told Sharon he didn't agree with the idea of women in ministry but would respect her in the role she was called to fulfill. "And he did," Sharon says. "He often called for counsel and to test his ideas and convictions."

Ministry on the Plains

In her role as conference minister, Sharon installed 25 long-term and interim pastors, licensed 10 and ordained eight. A primary question for her when placing pastors was about their sense of call to Central Plains. For one congregation, she contacted 50 people.

"It was a struggle to get pastors to come between the Mississippi and the Rockies," she says. But Sharon was convinced she only wanted to install those pastors who felt God was leading them to Central Plains.

Jantzi recalls that in his ordination interview, Sharon—the only female interviewer—asked the hardest questions. "I could answer the men's questions," he says, "but Sharon's questions really made me think." Her questions probed deeper as she asked about his feelings on being affirmed by his home congregation for licensing as well as stepping into pastoral responsibilities.

Kym notes that in his ministerial training, there was much emphasis on stepping into leadership "correctly," with certain credentials. But his life experience and conference work with Kennel taught him differently.

"It isn't about how much a person knows, it's about a person's willingness to learn and be on the journey with others," he says. "Sharon invited trust. The 'correct' credentials can't guarantee that kind of connection."

Diane Zaerr Brenneman of Wellman, Iowa, current moderator of Central Plains Conference, says, "Sharon's call to ministry is representative of the church doing its work: noticing and calling gifts God has given to the sisters and brothers among us."

In Scripture, Sharon has been inspired by the stories of Jesus and how he ministered to many different kinds of people. His service was humble, and he generously poured out love on those he served, she says. Passages in Ephesians (3:16-21) and Colossians (3:12-17) also gave her "courage to persevere in spite of seemingly impossible situations and to continue to believe in the church and the possibility that God can use imperfect people to carry out kingdom work in this world."

Sharon in her garden

Photo by Vada Snider

Sharon believes her story is important for other women to hear who are struggling with calls to ministry.

In thinking about her story of call, Sharon notes the book *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* by Kathleen Norris. In the book, Norris talks about the spiritual geography of a place. She writes: " 'Spiritual geography' describes the way a place shapes people's attitude, beliefs and myths. The spiritual geography of the Plains is complex. But the stark beauty of the land—its strength—also inspires strength in people."

Sharon says: "Opportunities are different in this part of the country. People get called on to do things they normally wouldn't do."

Supporting others on the journey

Sharon believes her story is important for other women to hear who are struggling with calls to ministry. Currently she is mentoring a young woman pastor. "I doubted my call on a number of occasions," she says. "I wondered if I heard God right. At times I felt beat down. It was difficult being the only woman at many meetings."

One gathering that Sharon supported early in her ministry was a women pastors' retreat that was held for several years. This was a safe place for women to share concerns and frustrations, as

Sharon participates in the ordination of Dave Miller, pastor at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Photo provided

well as worship together and celebrate. She also noticed that women in congregations were glad to have a female conference minister to talk to.

Sharon worked hard to build relationships among pastors, congregations, church leaders, the conference and the denomination. "I visited congregations for their special events, and other times just to be there with them."

Sharon has learned not to doubt God's call, even in seemingly impossible circumstances.

Sharon also often reminded herself to be herself, to be an advocate for pastors, elders and congregations, to be a presence and a safe place. Although at times she did not feel equipped and could be hard on herself about her shortcomings, she was aware that the conference that had called her was also committed to supporting her.

In her first years as conference minister, much of her work with congregations revolved around conflict resolution. "When challenges arose, I turned to others for council and advice," she says. "Our ministry staff was a great help as well as the Pastoral Leadership Committee. I researched resources so I could offer them to pastors and congregations, providing insight into the challenges they faced."

Schloneger also notes Sharon's ability to separate herself from difficult congregational issues. "She spoke into these issues and then was able to let them go."

Kym says emphatically, "She did a marvelous job. She had a passion for the good news and for helping people in congregations understand the good news for themselves. She could celebrate with congregations in the good moments and reconcile the difficult ones."

During a sabbatical Sharon was also able to enroll in seminary classes.

"I think Sharon would have enjoyed the luxury of a three-year seminary education before beginning her role," says Zaerr Brenneman. "However, the need in the churches was immediate. So she accepted the harder call of taking seminary classes while in ministry."

Sharon desired both to learn and to set an example for pastors who hadn't attended seminary. "I felt like I could encourage others to attend seminary because I had done it myself," she says.

In retirement, Sharon is looking forward to continued learning. She dreams of becoming a master gardener, pursuing quiltmaking and possibly taking other classes that catch her interest. Most importantly, though, she wants to connect with family and friends she had less time for while involved in conference ministry.

Sharon reflects on her journey since her studies at Hesston (Kan.) College and Goshen (Ind.) College in the mid to late 1960s. "At that time I believed the call was to congregational ministry of some kind," she says. "I now realize my gifts were most suited for administrative ministry."

"In years past, dreaming of being a conference minister was not on my radar," she says. "Rather, the call came organically—the culmination of many years of service to the conference, a reawakening of my sense of call into ministry, the nudging of God's Spirit and the overwhelming affirmation that came from many people."

Through these experiences Sharon has learned not to doubt God's call, even in seemingly impossible circumstances. Just as she was tapped on the shoulder, she now taps others. "I believe the experiences of the last 10 years have given me many tools for continuing to be a mentor and an encourager."

Joanna Shenk serves Mennonite Church USA as associate for interchurch relations and communication.

San Jin Choi (left) prays with a homeless person. Photo provided

Reflections on homelessness

by San Jin Choi

A Mennonite pastor's insights on being homeless ▶

I had a 30-day homeless experience from Feb. 21 to March 22, 2010, in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Atlanta. I slept in the shelters, subways and streets, and during the weekends I preached at the church and led seminars and workshops for ending homelessness.

Here are my reflections of my 30 homeless days.

Becoming unfriendly toward general people in the streets: After 15 days, I began to feel isolated and tried to look for a specific place where I could just sit down. I specifically searched for isolated places, even in the subway I sought out corners away from the crowds of people.

After 20-25 days, I wanted to be with other homeless people or the people who were isolated on the corners or sides of the streets. I found if people lost their home or had run away from home, they were highly vulnerable to drug dealers and gangs.

Many homeless people spend much of their time looking for shelters.

When I started growing a beard, people stared at me. Whenever I walked into shops, people didn't ask, "May I help you?" Instead, they asked, "What do you want?" Even when I walked into a Korean restaurant in the Manhattan area, I was rejected inside after only 30 days of being homeless. I imagine that homeless people who've been on the streets for years must be rejected straight from the door and must feel even more unwanted. I saw that homeless people must feel rejections every day.

San Jin Choi with Karl McKinney, pastor of Northern Virginia Mennonite Church, Fairfax, Va.
Photo provided

Struggling for beds in the shelter everyday: Many homeless people struggle every day to find places to sleep in the shelters because after registration times for the shelters, for example, 7 p.m., especially in the winter time, there is no room because they are full. After 7 p.m., many homeless people end up on the waiting list until sometimes 10 or 11 p.m. In my case, I was also on the waiting list at the time and was provided another stay in the county gym, which the government provided for homeless people on the waiting list. Even though I am serving the homeless people, I had believed that whenever they applied to the shelters they were immediately accepted, but with shelters that do not have enough room the waiting list is long and the homeless must look for a different shelter or be provided a temporary space. Therefore, many homeless people spend much of their time looking for shelters.

Where to go next: Generally around 6 or 7 a.m., all the homeless people in the shelters must leave. When I went out of the shelter at 6:30 a.m., I was apprehensive because I didn't know where to go next. At that early time, the majority of the stores were closed. If I were to look for 24-hour businesses, sometimes I had to travel up to a mile. In many cases the homeless have huge bags and must carry them those long distances, as I did in New Haven, Conn. Day-care centers for homeless people are needed programs.

Some of the shelters in America do not provide breakfast for homeless people. In the morning, when I was in a shelter in Philadelphia, there was no meal, so many homeless people tried to go to a shelter that provided a meal, but they were often far away.

Military culture in shelters? Many homeless shelters feel like military camps. First, at the entrance to shelters there are several security guards, like armed police. They check your bags, pockets, shoes and your entire body, similar to an inspection before you go on a flight. In the shelter, many staff members also look like military personnel. They use loud voices and sometimes threats, utilizing military-like language and motions. I understand their conduct because many homeless people are alcohol or drug addicts and sometimes have mental problems. But because of the staff's strict manner and behavior there are many conflicts. I saw as few as 10 to as many as 50 or more conflicts each day. I saw verbal arguments and physical conflicts. Shelters are not a reassuring place. You are always on edge because you're not sure what may happen next in the strict atmosphere with its military-like rules. Because of this, many homeless people feel compelled to stay outside these shelters and instead reside in the streets or local parks. Many homeless people suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse and sometimes lose many of their belongings wherever they had stayed overnight.

Losing belongings in the shelters: Many homeless people easily lose their belongings in the shelters. Among items they lose the most are coats or jackets. For instance, if a homeless person were to take off their jacket for a moment, they may lose it. Because of the high probability of losing something, many homeless people avoid shelters. When I was in a shelter in Philadelphia, a homeless person tried to take my bag at 2 a.m.

What I learned from the homeless experience: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaims the coming kingdom of God and invites the poor, the lame, the blind, the sick and the homeless, which comprised the majority of his audience, to listen to him. Many intelligent or upper-class people ignored Jesus' teachings. The people who will build the foundation of his kingdom were those he invited to receive his teachings (the poor, the lame, the blind, the sick and the homeless). Through my homeless experience, I decided that homeless people, though rejected or ignored by human beings, are precious people to God.

"But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," says Matthew 6:33. Seeking first his kingdom means restoration of his kingdom in our society. Poor or marginalized people are restored as kingdom citizens in our society. Also, I found that Jesus' being homeless in his life is a revolutionary event. According to Matthew 8:20, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." That means Jesus was homeless at the time and lived like a homeless person for three years during his public ministry. His being homeless has implications for serving poor neighbors through his homeless experience and understanding who they are—how much they are hungry, thirsty and lonely. So I want to add a theological or symbolical name for Jesus: the Homeless One. Already we call him the Counselor, the Healer, the Master.

Billy is a formerly homeless man who is now a deacon and musician in the ministry of Fourth Street Mennonite Church.
Photo provided

I decided that homeless people, though rejected or ignored by human beings, are precious people to God.

Jesus' life looks like a homeless person who gave all his possessions to the people, including his blood and flesh through the Crucifixion. That means he did not gain anything from life because our permanent home is in heaven, in his kingdom. Jesus said in Matthew 6:31: "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' " And in Matthew 6:34: "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

In conclusion, through his homelessness Jesus' kingdom had been restored, and he has restored the homeless as citizens of his kingdom in heaven. His homelessness means Jesus humbled himself to the lowest level to serve all people, regardless of social rank. This is important for our society today.

San Jin Choi is pastor of Fourth Street Community Fellowship in Washington, D.C., a congregation in formation with Virginia Mennonite Conference.

A long life of witness and service

Martha Graber 'helps make things work out.'

by Susan Miller Balzer

Martha F. Graber reads steadily, modulating her voice to adapt to the content. Reading *The Mennonite* on tape for those with visual impairment is the one volunteer job that she continued to do in her ninth decade.

Martha Graber reads *The Mennonite* at home.
Photo by Susan Miller Balzer

Martha says she can't remember exactly when she started reading *The Mennonite* on tape. It was "20 or so years ago—in the early or mid '80s." (At 91, a five- to 10-year discrepancy doesn't make much difference to Martha.)

In January, she ended her monthly responsibility. "I find that I stumble a little bit," she says, then adds, "I enjoy getting to read *The Mennonite* before everyone else does. There's always interesting things in it."

Martha has packed many varied activities into her long life. While raising a family of five children —James, Kenneth, Lowell, Karolyn and Marilyn—Martha and her late husband, Eldon, made their home in four Kansas towns (Whitewater, Pretty Prairie, Chapman and North Newton), as well as Bluffton, Ohio; Freeman, S.D.; Chicago and Zaria, Nigeria. Martha and Marilyn now live in the home Martha designed on Minneapolis Street in North Newton. To keep connected with all her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Martha plans "Graberamas"—when the family clan meets to visit, reminisce, pray, eat and play together.

Martha describes herself as a facilitator, one who "helps make things work out." She seems to have been equally at ease in the public eye as she is when working behind the scenes. Her interests and Christian convictions guide her activities, which now include taking part at Bethel College Mennonite Church and its Golden Agers group, exercising three times a week "to keep my strength up" at the Senior Center, which she helped start in Newton, attending Life Enrichment at Bethel College and participating in the Heartland Peace Tax Group. Last summer, the Heartland group honored her for her lifetime of peacemaking and gave her a scarf embroidered with "Foreclose on War, Invest in People," words that describe her lifelong priorities.

Foreclose on war

Martha was born in Turpin, Okla., to Marie Schmidt Friesen and Gerhard Friesen. Her father, she said, "was ahead of his time" in advocating war tax resistance and speaking out at Mennonite conferences against profiteering from the war economy. "His conscience would not let him support the military."

She said her father would have approved the 1983 action by the General Conference Mennonite Church to honor employee Cornelia Lehn's request to not have her income taxes withheld from her paychecks.

The Friesens practiced war tax resistance by living simply, giving generously and usually not earning enough to owe income taxes.

Although as a youth she was embarrassed by her father's outspokenness to audiences unreceptive to his message, Martha embraced her parents' convictions about Christian discipleship and peacemaking and taught them to her children. She files tax returns but usually has a zero taxable income due to living simply and giving 50 percent of her income to charity. She has also advocated for the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund legislation.

Invest in people

Martha has invested her life and her money in helping people in all stages of their lives, from toddlers to senior citizens.

She contributes stocks through the Mennonite Foundation to Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference and supports environmental and health-care organizations as well.

Martha has served her church, family and community as a volunteer and in jobs as varied as church organist, dietician, editor, child-care director and city clerk.

"She gives (to organizations that are working) to solve problems," Marilyn Graber says.

Martha has served her church, family and community as a volunteer and in jobs as varied as church organist, dietician, editor, child-care director and city clerk.

She earned a degree in home economics with minors in English and chemistry at Bethel College, North Newton, and later returned to Bethel for teacher education courses.

She taught in, organized and/or directed nursery schools and community day-care centers in Chicago, Bluffton and Wadsworth, Ohio; Hesston, Kan., and in Zaria, Nigeria.

Margie Swartzendruber, a founding leader at Hesston Community Child Care, remembers Martha's thriftiness, "She never wanted to throw anything away. When a toy was broken, she would try to fix it."

Martha was director of information services and admissions counselor at Freeman (S.D.) Junior College and Academy while her husband served there as president. When Eldon directed the education department at Bluffton (Ohio) College, Martha worked there as an instructor in geography and director of publicity.

From 1972 to 1977 she was a lecturer in home economics and psychology at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, where she and Eldon served in the Teachers Abroad Program. At ABU, she not only developed the home economics curriculum and degree program but worked with the architect to plan the classroom facilities.

Martha pioneered in including sex education in the Christian education curriculum.

At Bluffton, she served as advisor for the Student Christian Association, and in Nigeria her role with the Student Christian Fellowship was that of "Senior Friend," She tutored and counseled international students in university settings.

While her children were in school—a long time, since James is nearly 23 years older than his youngest sister—Martha chaired Parent Teacher Associations and led Cub Scouts. She did substitute teaching in local public schools.

Martha invested much of her life in Christian education. She taught Sunday school and Vacation Church School nearly 40 years and served on congregational and denominational Christian education and curriculum committees. She pioneered in including sex education in the Christian education curriculum. "People didn't talk about it at that time. We thought the church should be more involved in it."

Martha also gave leadership to local, regional and national women's mission and service committees and to the Bethel College Women's Association. Chair, president, consultant, organizer, director, resource person, speaker and writer are some of the "hats" Martha has worn.

Martha's can-do attitude often took her into the kitchen, where she helped organize and prepare fundraising meals and receptions. Although assuming many typical "women's jobs," Martha says she prefers participating in groups and organizations that are not exclusively for women.

Martha began researching and taking action on senior issues in the 1980s and was a co-director of the new Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging (later Mennonite Association of Retired Persons) in 1982-1986 and the founding president of Harvey County (Kan.) Coalition of Aging Services in 1984. She served on the county transportation advisory committee and chaired the local AARP community service and legislative committees. She also volunteered with the Central Kansas Adult Basic Education Literacy Program and with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

She was named Outstanding Older Kansan (already in 1986), Outstanding Branch Member of American Association of University Women in 1987 and Outstanding Member of Newton Area Retired Teachers Association in 1989.

What's ahead?

One of Martha's grandfathers lived to be more than 100 years old. A great-grandfather experienced a miraculous rescue by an angel when he was sinking in the ice near his Russian village.

Throughout her first 91 years, Martha has contributed to even more helping organizations than these listed in this story. In unpretentious ways, she has been the angel behind many miracles—giving a hand, sharing wisdom and encouraging young and old. Reading *The Mennonite* kept her abreast of the thought and news of her faith community. Sharing this with others, gave her a double blessing.

Bernie Wiebe, editor of *The Mennonite* from 1976 to 1986, when it was the publication of the General Conference Mennonite Church in both the United States and Canada, first invited Martha to read the periodical for tape recordings. At that time, she worked with a committee who read together in the denominational offices in Newton, Kan. Coordinating the reading of two 90-minute tapes by several readers and dealing with their differences in reading speed became more difficult than doing all the reading herself. So Martha came to read the ready-to-print copy of the magazine (which retained its original name when it merged with *Gospel Herald*) by herself at home and turned in the tapes in time for the recordings to be mailed at the same time as the print publication. She spent around four hours prereading the entire publication and making mental notes on prioritizing and adapting the copy to be read on tape. Taping took another four hours or so. She read the cover article and other feature and news stories, obituaries and some of the letters, as time on the tapes permitted.

The final tape recording was sent in January to 19 individual, nursing home and congregational subscribers.—*Susan Miller Balzer*

Susan Miller Balzer is a member of Hesston (Kan) Mennonite Church.

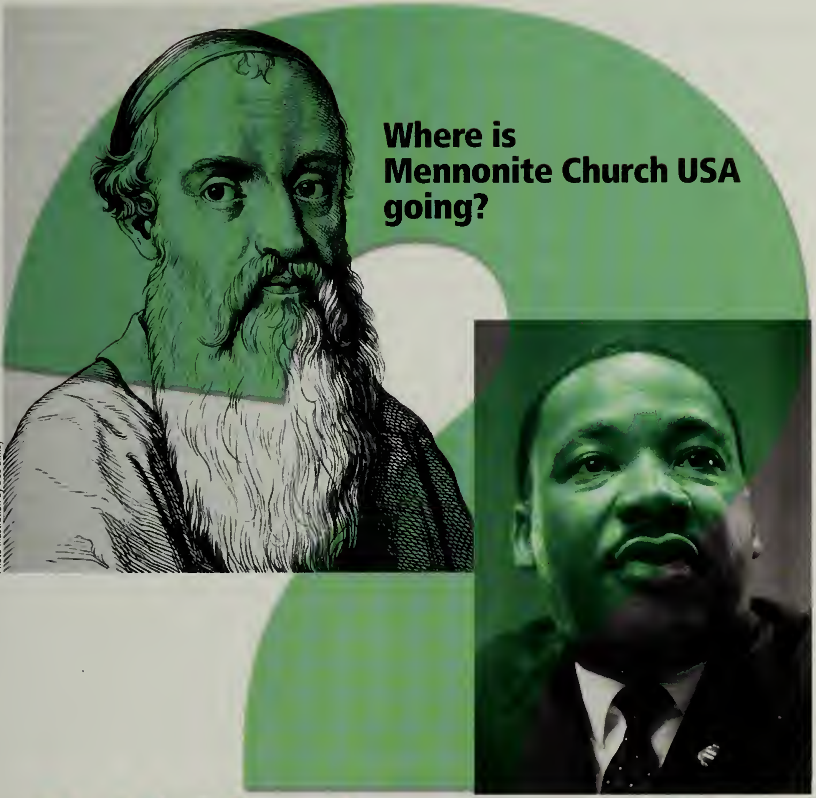


Photo Illustration by Dee Birkey

Where is Mennonite Church USA going?

Still dreaming

by Glen Alexander Guyton

In *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Dr. King writes: "I remember saying that so often the church in our struggle had been a taillight rather than a headlight. The church had so often been an echo rather than a voice." How true and prophetic are the words of Dr. King as I think not only of the whole church but specifically of Mennonite Church USA. Not only does our church seem to echo the leading of our popular culture, but we often parrot its rhetoric. As I reflect on the history and struggles of the past, I cannot help wondering where we as Mennonite Church USA are going today.

Last year at this time (February 2010, page 46) I asked, "Where are we Mennonites going?" The question was meant to stir a sense of lament and wonder in the reader to reflect on the progress of race relations within Mennonite Church USA. Little did I know that I would be embroiled in searching for answers to that very question because of the passage of Arizona's SB1070 and the selection of Phoenix, Ariz., as our 2013 convention location. Since April 2010 our church has wrestled with the question of "Where are we Mennonites going?" For most of us that question has only pertained to the location of our 2013 convention, but I hope, dare I say dream, that the question goes deeper than that.

Dr. King had a dream, a prophetic vision about racial equality in the United States of America. It is a dream that for the most part has come true. I am not naïve enough to believe that racism does not exist in our society or in our church. I understand that our world is far from perfect, but unlike the children of Israel, who refused to see the promises of God because of a few giants, I refuse to overlook the great changes that have occurred since the civil rights movement because of a few racists. Call me a dreamer, but I have chosen to see the hope and blessings that are before me.

My reality is that I can sit, eat and work at places that 50 years ago would have been off limits to me. My children attend schools and live in neighborhoods with whites, Africans, Asians, Latinos and many other ethnic groups. Their circle of friends is as diverse as the United Nations. In Mennonite Church USA, the racial and gender diversity of our leadership continues to shift to include more women and more people of color. We still have obstacles in our path, but in some ways the mountains look more like molehills, and the molehills have begun to resemble speed bumps.

Great change has happened in our nation since Dr. King's time. I feel a bit uneasy making that observation because I'm only 41 and have not endured the hardships or struggles faced by those who fought for civil rights. In fact, I live a pretty good middle-class life, although I grew up in a modest all-black neighborhood. I am a child of the promises of God, a testament to the good work of others. My perspective on race is based on what I have read and heard from history. Yet as I study history, I understand that when true change has come into our world, it has been because of the people of God.

In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Dr. King wrote: "There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society." I hear Dr. King saying that something should not become an issue on CNN before it becomes an issue for prayer and action in Mennonite

We still have obstacles in our path, but in some ways the mountains look more like molehills, and the molehills have begun to resemble speed bumps.

Church USA. The way we live out our witness as Mennonites should not be tied to our political affiliations or to ideas promoted by professional pundits. We must lead by God's Spirit and prayer, not by polls and surveys.

February is Black History Month in the United States, but the history of African-Americans in this country holds lessons for the future of our nation and our Anabaptist churches. The black church and its leadership were instrumental in bringing about social change in our society because it was morally and spiritually necessary. Yet there was always a desire from people of color to have the white church join the struggle for racial equality in greater numbers. Almost 50 years later, we hear members of Iglesia Menonita Hispana expressing the same desire. Like the disenfranchised Negro of the 1960s, immigrants of the 21st century are calling out to the church to leave its silos of isolation to become a beacon of healing and hope, as the popular society looks on.

At times in our Mennonite history, conflict has been brought to our doorsteps. Franklin Yoder writes: "Perhaps no event affected the Mennonite church during the 20th century as profoundly as World War II. At every level of the church, from churchwide organizations to local communities, World War II forced changes that fundamentally reshaped the church and its relationship to the surrounding society. Like almost all Americans, Mennonites suddenly found themselves in a maelstrom of events that pulled them in even when they preferred to remain on the fringes and out of the spotlight." (See www.mcusa-archives.org/MHB/YoderWWII.html.) One conclusion we can draw from the reflections of Mennonites who experienced threats and challenges during World War II is that if the church does not lead and speak to the ills and discontent of society, society itself will knock on our door. While some Mennonites lived in isolated silence, more than 4,800 Mennonite men served in Civilian Public Service. (See www.themennonite.org/issues/10-12/articles/The_legacy_of_CPS.) Surely the draft was a motivating factor, but serve they did.

After the trials and tension of World War II ended, the Mennonite church was again challenged by the Civil Rights Movement. In his paper "Mista Midnights: Mennonites and Race in Mississippi," David Swartz reflects on the experiences of Mennonite historian and social ethicist Guy F. Hershberger, who embarked on a month-long tour of the South in 1963:

"By the early 1960s, Hershberger had maintained a regular correspondence with Martin Luther King Jr. for several years and was coming close to siding with King's program of nonviolent resistance to racism, though previously Hershberger had derided even nonviolent resistance as a form of class warfare. Unlike his previous sojourns to the South, Hershberger came this time not to strengthen ecumenical ties with King, civil rights organizations and African-American churches but to see how our Mennonite people were responding to segregation in the Deep South. Preaching and leading discussions about race relations, he saw much about the Mennonites in North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana that pleased him. In Macon, Miss., he found a father and son, Perry and Thomas Miller, Mennonites who had moved the year before from Middlebury, Ind., already deeply involved in community development, employing large numbers of coloreds and teaching many to read. In Boone, N.C., he found a thriving Mennonite Brethren colony, which, he reported, was all Negro and consists of four or five congregations at various points within the county.

We must lead by God's Spirit and prayer, not by polls and surveys.

"But Hershberger also discovered much that disturbed him. Too many southern Mennonites, he thought, were misbehaving. In Atmore, Ala., Hershberger felt that the leadership has absorbed too much of the spirit of rank-and-file Southern whites … characterized by a uniformly familiar ring of an unhealthy, unchristian anti-Negro attitude. In Macon, Miss., he heard troubling statements by Mennonites about niggers, including a considerable amount of complaint about their slovenly ways, without a sympathetic understanding of what makes them that way. … After his tour of over a dozen Mennonite congregations, he concluded that some appeared to defend segregation almost with desperation. Thus in the course of one month in 1963, Hershberger had encountered a staggering variety of positions on racial belief and practice in a religious movement that preached racial egalitarianism, though this ideal remained largely theoretical and widely untested on the ground." (See www.goshen.edu/mqr/pastissues/oct04swartz.html.)

Now in the 21st century, we quiet Mennonites are again challenged with a variety of issues. Short of war, what will it take for us to heed the words of Menno Simons? "True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it has become all things to all people." What issues today can we as Mennonites deem important enough for us to speak out against the government as those politically charged founders of the church did when they were dubbed radicals? Is it immigration? Is it institutional racism, human trafficking, homosexual marriage? Will we be guided by the popular media or will something greater be our guide? How quickly we forget the lesson we learned from our past. History is shouting at our church to either find a way to change the world or have the world change us. Where did this acceptance of Mennonites as "quiet in the land" come from? That is not how I understand the history of our church.

We have chosen as our vision: "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world." This vision screams to the heaven that we "Can't Keep Quiet" and that we will take on the pain and despair of those in our world who have lost hope. In our purpose statement we confess that we are "Joining in God's activity in the world, [and] we develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures."

I am still dreaming that our Mennonite congregations and members will continue to move from rhetoric and theory to the practical application of our faith. I am still dreaming that the radical Anabaptist spirit that compelled me to join the Mennonite church will move from the history pages and into the hearts and minds of our people. I am still dreaming that people will forget that Mennonites were once yoked with the title of quiet in the land, and we will be extolled as bringers of hope, makers of peace and the living embodiment of the gospel of Christ.

Glen Alexander Guyton is associate executive director of constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA.

MC USA
VISION STATEMENT

"God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

Confessions of a modern-day pacifist

by Lisa Schirch

The death of Mennonite Central Committee worker Glen Lapp in Afghanistan last August raises questions about pacifists working in war zones without armed guards. I stayed with Glen and other MCC workers at a small guesthouse during my visits to Afghanistan to teach peacebuilding at Kabul University.

Glen Lapp (left) with the author. Photo provided

What should pacifism look like today? ▶

On my first night in Afghanistan I lay in bed watching my breath coil above me in a heatless room, hovering around 30 degrees F. All night, I listened to the calls to prayer from the local mosque and felt the vibrations of helicopters overhead. In the morning, I stood at my room's bay window trying to figure out if I could prevent the cold air from blowing in or stop the windows rattling with every helicopter passing overhead. That's when I realized the window of my ground-floor room did not have a lock. More than feeling the cold or hearing the noise, I felt afraid. After struggling unsuccessfully to get the window locked, Glen concluded, "It doesn't really matter; we don't lock the front door to the house either."

As a pacifist there are causes for which I am prepared to die but none I can imagine that would lead me to kill.

To be fair, the guesthouse is in a cement-walled compound with a locked gate. But that night, as I stared at the ceiling, I thought, This is pacifism circa 2010. Most of the other foreigners in the city have machine guns and soldiers between them and the Afghan streets. I remembered the story of Pennsylvania Quakers in the 1700s who kept their doors unlocked at night to send a peace signal to the Natives (who, by the way, were referred to as terrorist insurgents back then) waging war against the new, often violent settlers who were taking their land.

What is pacifism?

Pacifism, as I understand it, means most literally "lover of peace" in Greek. But more specifically, in the Christian tradition, pacifism focuses on living without harming others at the minimum and as much as possible loving enemies and doing good to those who harm you.

Pacifism assumes that punishment and retribution do little to bring about change and tend to escalate the cycle of violence. It is not moral or even possible to "kill all the bad guys." It is only possible to identify and address factors leading to violence in the environment, such as unemployment. As a pacifist there are causes for which I am prepared to die but none I can imagine that would lead me to kill.

The U.S. military is a scapegoat for many U.S. pacifists. Condemning military aggression is easy; we point fingers at other people who do harm. There are not many pacifist efforts to love people in the military.

Yet many new military leaders are starting to preach that, counter to traditional military strategy, the "shock and awe" of dropping bombs does not grow peace; it creates more hatred, an endless cycle of violence. When U.S. soldiers faced an angry mob of Haitian youth after the earthquake, their leader ordered the soldiers to "take two steps back and sit down" rather than fire their weapons at the crowd. In turn, the surely surprised Haitian youth mirrored the soldiers and also sat down. Pacifism may not be intuitive, but military leaders know that nonviolent approaches can be ingenious when practiced bravely.

How do pacifists love those they disagree with?

A tale of Mennonite pacifism

I come from a long tradition of self-identified pacifists dating back to the 1500s in Switzerland, where my ancestors scratched my last name into the town castle's torture chambers. Perhaps they were tortured for something less noble than pacifism, such as public drunkenness. As for many other Mennonites, pacifism has been a point of family conflict. In the last few generations, my Mennonite-born uncles and grandfather served in the U.S. military.

But the legends of early Mennonites loving their enemies made a profound impact on my psyche and professional life. My faith draws on images from the *Martyrs' Mirror* of Dirk Willems pulling the armed guard who was chasing him out of the frozen river, only to then be arrested and put to death for his beliefs. Or Janneken Munstdorp, who, shortly before being burned at the stake in 1573 for refusing to recant her belief in Anabaptist pacifism, wrote a letter to her children similar to the one I have written to my own children should anything happen to me while doing my work in peacebuilding.

Pacifism incarnate was difficult to imagine as a child. I lived an easy, peaceful life in rural Ohio. The moral ambiguities implicit in pacifism set in when, as part of Goshen (Ind.) College's semester abroad, I worked in a Nicaraguan refugee camp's health center tending the gangrenous wounds of Contra soldiers.

Listening to and cleaning the wounds of soldiers, some of whom had committed horrible atrocities against civilians in Nicaragua, where my brother documented such incidents with a group called Witness for Peace, was life changing. Before, good and evil had seemed like separate phenomena. But when you start to love people you disagree with, everyone starts looking a lot more like a human being doing the best they can with what they know and have experienced.

In the field of peacebuilding, we teach the skills and values of dialogue. We ask Christians, Jews and Muslims to sit together and share points of view. We ask Israelis and Palestinians to reach out across the political divisions. As a pacifist, it seems only natural to reach out to the U.S. military to understand different points of view and find common ground. Attending military conferences with a name badge identifying me as from "Eastern Mennonite University" leads to many interesting conversations about Mennonite pacifism. My military colleagues admire Mennonite humanitarian work around the world. But they are curious about our antagonism with the military, noting the many contradictions and ambiguities of pacifism circa 2010.

Modern challenges to pacifism

When I landed in Iraq in 2005 with MCC, local partners provided an armed guard to me as I facilitated a peacebuilding and development training. Shrouded in a black headscarf, I sought to blend in. I asked my hosts if I could ride in the bus with the other Iraqi participants rather than in the Land Rover with the armed guard. My hosts graciously explained that actually I would put them in more danger to do so. The armed guard, it seems, was deemed necessary for the safety of the Iraqi participants in the workshop. As a Westerner, I brought greater attention and threat to them. So I accepted the armed guard. Did this betray my pacifism?

When an armed gunmen went into a school, tied up Amish girls and started shooting, the Amish called armed police to stop him. That moment illustrates so-called "two-kingdom theology," the belief that there is God's kingdom, where Mennonites practice pacifism, and there is the secular kingdom, where we need armed police to maintain law and order. Is it pacifist to ask someone with a gun to come deal with a man threatening Mennonite youth?

The Taliban have been going into schools around Afghanistan and shooting girls. In Afghanistan, nearly all of MCC's partners support a U.S. military presence training Afghan police to protect civilians from the Taliban. Is there a difference between Mennonites calling the police when they are attacked in their homes or schools versus Mennonites supporting a U.S. military presence and police force to prevent Taliban attacks on girls' schools in Afghanistan?

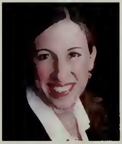
Last year I spent an hour on a local talk radio program in Harrisonburg, Va., receiving hate-filled questions about Mennonite pacifists living in the Shenandoah Valley. Like some of my military colleagues, callers asked why Eastern Mennonite University will not fly the U.S. flag and why Mennonites are not willing to send their boys off to fight for the freedoms and privileges of living in this country. I explained how Mennonites risk their lives around the world, with equal sacrifice and dedication to the principles of freedom as military soldiers. But Mennonite pacifists have not communicated clearly our alternative versions of patriotism to show our love of the land we live in and the world we belong to.

Loving those condemning Mennonite pacifism means taking seriously their accusations of our contradictions and double standards. If the concept of pacifism is to be anything more than a quaint if naïve relic of the past, it needs some serious updating.

> Loving those condemning Mennonite pacifism means taking seriously their accusations of our contradictions and double standards.

In its 90-year history, MCC has only lost one person other than Glen to direct violence out of 19,000 field workers. Most pacifism today calls for far less sacrifice than giving one's life in a war zone to help people.

Perhaps Glen Lapp's simple lifestyle as an avid bike rider and conscientious consumer says more about pacifism today than the loss of his life. Perhaps modern-day pacifism is about looking inward, at everyday choices of what we eat, wear, drink and how we transport ourselves in ways that respect land and people. Perhaps pacifism requires a tad less judgment of others we see as "harming" and more engaging our neighbors to build understanding and love for those different from us.



Lisa Schirch is professor of peacebuilding at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Reclaim the wisdom of Hans Denck

by Ruth Anne Abraham

Hans Denck, an important early Anabaptist leader, offers wisdom for Mennonites today.

Hans Denck, an important early Anabaptist leader, offers wisdom for modern Mennonites. Both as a denomination and as individuals, we can live in community, loving our brothers and sisters in the midst of our disagreements.

Denck, who was born in 1500 and died of plague in 1527, was recognized by his contemporaries as a spiritual leader of the emerging Swiss/ South German Anabaptist movement. Denck was closely associated with such Swiss/ South German leaders as Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Hut. In fact, Denck participated in a 1527 convocation in Augsburg that came to be known as the "Martyrs' Synod." Other than Denck, who left

Mike Short, 2010 TM Photo Contest entrant

Denck asks the profound question of how God, who is unchanging and eternal, reveals himself in his created world, which is transitory and temporal.

Augsburg for Basel right after the convocation, most participants were imprisoned and executed.

Denck asks the profound question of how God, who is unchanging and eternal, reveals himself in his created world, which is transitory and temporal. Denck's answer is both transcendent and pragmatic; his answer addresses both the individual search for spiritual understanding and the corporate effort to find this enlightenment. Denck propounds a Logos theology in which God's Word operates at two levels, as an inner word and outer word.

The inner Word is the ultimate Truth. This Word is Love, as God is Love. The Word was made incarnate in Christ Jesus. The quest to know and receive the Word is best satisfied through Jesus Christ. The true disciple of Christ must follow in his way, since this is the path of Christ Jesus, God's Logos for this world. When we walk the way Christ walked, we are friends of God.

"For whoever supposes he belongs to Christ must walk the way Christ walked. Thus one enters the eternal dwelling of God" (*The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck: Interpretation and Translation of Key Texts* by Clarence Bauman, E.J. Brill, 1991). "Therefore, he who desires to know and to attain true Love, cannot receive it more directly and more easily than through this Jesus Christ." (Quotations are from this translation.)

The Word has operated throughout the history of the world. This Word or Logos is Christ, and it existed before Christ incarnate and continues today. Christ, the Lamb, existed from the beginning of the world and will continue until the end of time. Christ the Lion from the tribe of Judah worked through the elect before Christ's incarnation and will ultimately save the world.

"Indeed, even the Lamb that suffered in Christ has suffered from the beginning of the world (Revelation 13) and will suffer until the end of the world (Matthew 25). Even the lion from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49), who triumphed through Christ (Revelation 5), also overcame from the beginning in all the elect (Numbers 23 and 24) and will do so until the last enemy is removed (Isaiah 30, 1 Corinthians 15). The Lamb and the lion are the one Word of God."

Denck continues this passage with the assertion that this Word exists in our hearts. This is an incredible statement of faith. The Lamb and Lion are the One, unchanging, eternal Word of God "which is in our hearts."

"The Lamb and the Lion are the one Word of God of which the whole world is full (Jeremiah 23, Wisdom of Solomon 1), indeed, which is in our hearts (Deuteronomy 30, Romans 10), not to be idle, but to do the mandate of the Father (John 4)."

God is perfect Love. His Word exists in its inner, eternal form in the Spirit, manifest in Christ, and within the heart of humanity. This "divine spark" connects us to the inner Word. This spark makes faith possible. "This spark … is not of man but has come from perfect Love."

"One perceives a little spark of this Love in a few people, in some more than in others, although in most people of our time it is regrettably extinguished; nevertheless, since Love is spiritual and people are carnal, it is certain that this spark, however small it is in man, is not of man but has come from perfect Love. This Love is God."

Denck is concerned that biblical legalism will lead God's children down the wrong path.

Scripture, the outer Word, is necessarily secondary to the inner Word. Although Denck values Scripture above all "human treasure," he recognizes that Scripture is not the eternal Word of God. Scripture, written "with pen and paper," is a temporal outer Word. God's Word resides not primarily in created constructs, however valuable, but in the soul of humanity. The inner Word exists in the world as a "true spark of divine zeal" within all human hearts.

"Holy Scripture I hold above all human treasure but not as high as the Word of God that is living, powerful and eternal—unattached and free of all elements of this world; for, since it is God himself, it is Spirit and not letter, written without pen and paper so that it can never be eradicated. Therefore, salvation is not bound to Scripture, however useful and good it might be in furthering it. ... But a devout heart, containing a true spark of divine zeal, is improved through all things."

Hans Denck is uncharacteristically uncompromising, maybe even harsh, when he warns of legalistic religion based on a "dead letter." Denck is concerned that biblical legalism will lead God's children down the wrong path. "Seeking light" they will "find darkness."

Denck is confident that the truth will ultimately be revealed to true friends of God, in whom the spark of Love has grown.

"Whoever has received the new covenant of God, that is, in whose heart the Law was written through the Holy Spirit, is truly righteous. Whoever supposes he will accomplish keeping the Law through the book, ascribes to the dead letter what belongs to living Spirit. Whoever does not have the Spirit and presumes to find it in the Scripture, seeks light and finds darkness."

Early Anabaptism experienced conflict over the nature, function and interpretation of Scripture. Denck was aware of these disagreements and contradictory uses of biblical passages. (See "He Who Truly Loves the Truth," a presentation of 40 biblical paradoxes.) Denck personally experienced the divisive tone of much of the theological discussion of his day. Unlike many of his Anabaptist contemporaries, Denck was not quick to find error in others; he was ever aware of his own propensity to err. Denck confessed, "I am a man who has erred and may yet err." He recognized the limitations of human knowledge, even with the presence of the Word in the human heart. He advocated humility in the search for God's revelation. This is genuine spiritual humility, a humility grounded in poverty of spirit.

"Where there is a part that he [the true disciple of Christ] cannot understand from the whole, he certainly scorns no scriptural testimony but rather examines it with all diligence and holds it up for comparison. But he will not accept it until it is first interpreted to him through the anointing of the Spirit. He reserves judgment concerning what he does not understand and awaits revelation from God."

Our individual quest for understanding occurs within both a solitary and corporate setting. The corporate setting for discernment tends to be messy. We should learn to listen to other viewpoints. Perhaps we will understand and agree. If we do not understand, then we should withhold judgment.

"But you, when hearing your brother speak something that is strange to you, do not immediately contradict it but hear if it be true, that you might also accept it. If you cannot understand it, you should not judge him, and, if he considers you to be slightly in error, consider whether your error might be even greater."

In our search for understanding—the "costly pearl"—we must be free. Coercion, however well intended, should not be employed in controversial matters. Unfortunately, it is sometimes better to separate from or "shun" someone when they refuse to listen to what others have to say. "I cannot have much fellowship with those who do not wish to hear me ... but would forcibly drive me from my faith and coerce me to theirs." Although Denck acknowledges the need for shunning, this need for separation is tempered with a nuanced call for shunning in a spirit of love.

"Those hearts that exalt this blessed deed of

God through Christ and follow in his footsteps make me rejoice, and I love them as well as I know how. However, I cannot have much fellowship with those who do not wish to hear me and yet will not keep silence in controversial matters, for I sense not the mind of Christ in them but rather a perverted one that would forcibly drive me from my faith and coerce me to theirs, God allow, whether it be right or not. And if he indeed is right, the zeal may well be good, but he exercises it without wisdom. For he should know that in matters of faith everything should be voluntary and without compulsion. Thus I separate myself from some, not because I consider myself better or more righteous than they but (although in such a case much is lacking in my relation to them) in order that I may unhindered freely seek the precious pearl and, inasmuch as I have found it, that I might (as far as I am able) retain the same with everyone's peace. ... With this conscience I await gladly and fearlessly the judgment of Jesus Christ. ... On which account I wish not to be justified but know and realize full well that I am a man who has erred and may yet err."

Denck is confident that the truth will ultimately be revealed to true friends of God, in whom the spark of Love has grown. This discernment has nothing to do with coercive, manipulative "cunning." "What is true discernment will indeed remain before the world. Cunning which is not of God a true friend of God can and must counter and confound solely with the truth."

Until that day, however, when all is revealed, "the day of the revelation of all mysteries ... when the Lord will come in his glory," Love must govern our differences of opinion. God is Love, and God revealed his Love in Christ, and this Love exists in the heart of humanity.

"Here, all the wise are in need of wisdom, and all the friends of God in need of Love, lest they prefer the love of man to God's Love. For whoever loves someone other than through God's truth and Love, hates him; but whoever for the sake of God's Love hates someone, loves him more than the other. Yet, for the sake of Love, one cannot hate anyone beyond the intention of earnestly admonishing him and, with heartfelt sorrow shunning him, if he does not wish to hear: this also is called being truly loved."

It is time to reclaim the wisdom of Hans Denck. I suggest we take a more "Denckian" approach to discernment of Truth, particularly in regard to biblical interpretation. How might we apply Denck's wisdom to our corporate search? What guidance does Denck offer Mennonites today?

Regarding Mennonite Church USA, I offer the following suggestions:

1. Encourage sharing of differing viewpoints; show respect and love especially when we do not understand the viewpoint.
2. Practice humility when we use Scripture to buttress a viewpoint. Our statements of faith should be bracketed by expressions of humility as our understanding of God's Word is incomplete and prone to err.
3. Abandon the perverted use of the "Mennonite Confession of Faith" as some sort of final truth. Instead use it as a picture of understanding at a point of time before "the day of revelation of all mysteries."
4. Allow individual congregations to follow their own understanding but be prepared to say goodbye to groups who "do not wish to hear." This means saying goodbye to those who promote their particular line of "dogma" but refuse to be open to others' viewpoints.

Encourage sharing of differing viewpoints; show respect and love especially when we do not understand the viewpoint.

Regarding the broader Mennonite/Anabaptist community, I suggest increased communication with more listening and less talking. (1) Listen to and seek out sharing of differing viewpoints. Try to understand. If this is impossible, recognize humbly the time of revelation is not ripe. (2) Join in support of those areas in which agreement exists. (3) Remember the controversies of our history that time has proved to be irrelevant.

Let us reclaim the wisdom of Hans Denck.

"Where this covenant [of baptism] is, there the Spirit of Christ also comes hither and ignites the fire of love, which consumes fully what infirmity remains and completes the work of Christ."

May the spirit of Christ, God's Word, "ignite the fire of love" to consume what is imperfect and "complete the work of Christ" in our individual and corporate life.

Ruth Anne Abraham is a member of Austin (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Lessons learned as a teenager

Iris de León-Hartshorn is executive conference minister for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference.

In *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell, one of my favorite authors, Gladwell writes about what makes people successful, suggesting that people are not just naturally successful. When you follow their lives, you see that their journeys prepared them.

Reflecting on the book led me to think about my own journey and the opportunities and challenges that have brought me to where I am today. Right away, two life lessons came to mind.

The first was from when I was in Girl Scouts at age 12 or 13. We were planning our first camping trip, and each group picked a leader. My group chose me. We were responsible to make sure we had all we needed for our camping trip. Our group made a list and decided what each person would bring. It was so easy. All I had to do was assign the items and wait for the day we'd meet at the campgrounds, which was four weeks away. I didn't give the trip another thought.

The day of the trip, one-third of my team did not even show up. Two of the girls who didn't come were in charge of bringing the tents, so our group was without tents. That night we ate corn on the cob and a baked apple because our meat and salad didn't show up. We slept half the night in the cold, until some other teams invited us into their tents, even though it was crowded. We were not happy campers.

My team was furious with me, since it had been my job to make sure that what we needed got to the camp. It hadn't occurred to me to call my team members to make sure they were coming or to see whether they needed help in securing their assigned items. I felt I had failed as a team leader.

However, I did learn some valuable lessons. A good team leader keeps in contact with her team. She makes sure team members are moving forward in their assignments and offers help or suggestions if there are obstacles and that other team members are willing to help if the team leader asks for it.

My second wake-up call as a leader was during my senior year of high school, when I was vice president of my class. Each year, every class built a huge float for the homecoming parade, and that year our class was to build a Viking ship. The class president was voted homecoming queen, so I was put in charge of organizing the construction of the float with only three weeks to go. I was terrified. Our floats had won every year previously, and now I had to figure out how to construct a Viking ship. Luckily, our class advisor was a wonderful teacher and mentor. After I went to her in tears, she lovingly sat me down and told me, "You have the skills to put this together."

She worked with me to make a plan and advised me on how to recruit volunteers from my class. She told me I needed to display confidence that we could accomplish the task and bring some joy and excitement to the effort. The next day—fliers in hand—I invited every senior I came in contact with to a fun time of float building, sharing my excitement about what we could accomplish with their help. I made it our project rather than my responsibility.

> If I allow myself to be vulnerable and ask for help, there are people who will walk with me and guide me.

In the end, we had plenty of volunteers, and our float won first place. Even though the experience was stressful, I learned more leadership lessons: First, mentors are invaluable resources for leaders. Second, as leaders we must convey confidence and joy in what we do, if we expect others to join us. Finally, as leaders we must share the responsibility so that others also can have a sense of accomplishment and take ownership in the work.

What I learned about myself was equally important. If I allow myself to be vulnerable and ask for help, there are people who will walk with me and guide me. Had I not had the disastrous camping trip, I might not have asked for help with the float. I believe the two experiences are linked.

These experiences have had a significant impact on the leader I am today. I've come to believe that what makes a good team is communication, confidence, building a vision and allowing others to share in the responsibility and work toward the vision. Most importantly, a leader who knows his or her limits and is able to ask for help can become a role model for others who are trying to find their way in leadership. TM

Pop's encore

Pop's encore was set in motion as my mother, Betty Detweiler King, was dying in September 2010. Breaking his hip last February had left my dad Aaron's mind fogged-in. Alzheimer's? Lingering post-hospital psychosis? We were never sure. We just knew that we, along with millions more, were facing that slice-through-the-heart feeling of seeing now in second childhood a parent who once symbolized the very essence of strong and adult.

The first time he wanted me to cut his hair, I thought, I just can't. It was too stark a symbol of our role reversal. I wanted him to take care of me, to be my shield against life's dangers. To cut his hair was to take care of him.

But I cut his hair. Then and later. And how far I realized we had journeyed together when on the last day I saw him alive he wanted to be sure his hair was combed. Someone offered me a comb; I said, "No, this time I want to use my own comb." I was tempted to seal it in glass but put it back in my pocket, grateful to think of my dad's DNA blending on it with my own.

> No matter our health or life stage, we can give each other amazing blessings to the end.

And between the first hair-cutting and the final combing did come Pop's encore. As my mother was dying, I doubted we should get Pop to the hospital. I thought it would be too intense—it would hurt so much, but he wouldn't know why. My sister Jewel was unhesitating: He needed to be there. She was right. He found tears and words to say goodbye to the woman he was able to name one last time the love of his life.

Then, and who can say precisely how it came to be, he kept back in skilled nursing care the ability to name he had regained in the hospital. Genesis tells of God giving humans the ability to name what is. What a power! What a loss when it flees us! What a miracle when we recover it, as he did—able once more to look into my eyes and name me "Michael" and into the eyes of all his children, grandchildren and friends and name us all!

But he had regained even the ability to name his relationships with us, his love for us, his wisdoms if anything too rarely uttered while our mother was alive. For three months he poured himself into reaching back across his 88 years to our births, to our childhoods and adulthoods, to the life shared with friends, such as beloved members and spouses of the Crusaders Quartet (Aaron and Betty, Roy and Florence Kreider, Eugene and Alice Souder, Paul and Bertha Swarr). He'd give us, as one of my brothers put it, that "piercing blue gaze," and we'd know either some insight to treasure was brewing or that the blue gaze itself was this time the gem.

One treasure was his renewed ability to track that I had become a seminary dean. He first learned I was a candidate before he broke his hip, and all he managed to do was worry (as did I, actually) that the job was too big. Then he lost ability even to understand what a job was. But during his encore I prayed with him one night, prayed that God would be the strength making perfect his deepening weakness, and as I moved to the amen I heard his halting voice start up. He prayed, "And God, give Michael your strength to do his job."

That was for me a big moment in Pop's encore. But that small matter of hair and comb also kept turning big. His combs kept vanishing. That care for hair that had become a sign of the dignity increasingly hard to come by would be blocked by a missing piece of plastic. For weeks I'd visit and forget to bring the new combs I kept promising. Finally I did it; I managed to buy not only one comb but three—one for the top of his dresser, one to be a spare in the drawer and one I kept in my car just in case. We both had a sense that day, combs everywhere, that life had taken a fine turn indeed.

I could tell of all the ways he blessed countless more, but those are their stories, so let me just say this yet: The power of those three months stuns me. Earlier last year I thought Aaron M. King had pretty much given the fathering he had to give. Yet his encore transformed much of what had gone before. He died Jan. 3, having taught this final father's lesson: No matter our health or life stage, we can give each other amazing blessings to the end.

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., and Harrisonburg, Va., is dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and publisher of Cascadia Publishing House, LLC.

Rethinking the prosperity gospel

Phil Lindell Detweiler is a Mennonite Mission Network worker living in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Every Sunday at Breakthru Church International, our home congregation here in South Africa, we proclaim the following before giving our offering: "As we give today's offering, we are believing the Lord for jobs or better jobs, benefits, sales and commissions, settlements, estates and inheritances, interest and income, rebates and returns, checks in the mail, gifts and surprises, finding money, bills paid off, debts demolished, royalties received. It's offering time. Hallelujah."

I have to admit that when I first encountered this giving declaration in our early days of attending Breakthru, my anti-health-and-wealth gospel radar immediately fired up. I looked around me to see if there were any people I didn't want to notice me making such a proclamation and mumbled through it, or I didn't say it at all.

Knee-jerk reactions are unfair, even more so for mission workers working with partners who don't and shouldn't have to share all their personal values, theological inclinations and traditions. But I have since decided that my immediate appraisal of this giving declaration was misguided. In fact, God's agency in helping us prosper in every sense of the word might be part of the gospel after all—and one Westerners need to take a second look at.

Have we largely reduced Jesus' promise to give us abundant life to the spiritual sphere?

One challenge to my anti-prosperity gospel radar came when I learned to differentiate between self-centered and God-centered prosperity. What do we do about the biblical indications that God made the patriarchs prosper materially (Genesis 13:2; 26:12-14; and 30:37-43)? I am still infuriated by a gospel that preaches prosperity devoid of self-sacrifice. But I have come to believe that there may well be a place for a biblical understanding of prosperity that is both God-centered and self-sacrificing.

Our pastors at Breakthru, Nina and Russell Toohey, have given new meaning to financial self-sacrifice. They sold their house a few years back and gave all the proceeds to the church. They have continued to give sacrificially and monthly to Breakthru Community Action, the nonprofit organization we helped establish to become Breakthru's social ministry arm. During these years they have also been able to buy another house, and someone from the church gave Pastor Nina a car. Both the self-sacrifice and their prosperity fit into their biblical understanding of reaping and sowing and how that relates to God's favor.

The tithe declaration has challenged me to recognize that I had little belief that God could—or would desire to—shape my economic reality. I too often don't give the Lord much authority in my daily life over such mundane affairs. Could it be that my response to the tithe declaration says more about my lack of faith than about my South African colleagues' belief in God's desire to see them prosper materially? Are there other North American Mennonites like me who have largely reduced Jesus' promise to give us abundant life to the spiritual sphere? Have we spiritualized salvation too much? For most Africans we have worked with, God is not interested only in saving our souls but also wants us to break out of poverty, succeed in school and help make our crops grow—all so we can provide for our families and for God's larger family.

This connection between spirituality and economy makes sense in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, considering that traditional worldviews here are holistic, linking the material and the spiritual. But is this a contextualization of the gospel that is appropriate only for this setting?

I now believe this association of spirituality and economy is a more biblical worldview than was my own. Having lived in Africa, I no longer believe that wealth has to be inherently evil or that wealthy people are intrinsically sinful. The concept of shalom leads me to believe that God is interested in making us prosper in all areas of our lives: bodily health, peace, justice, harmonious relationships with God and our neighbor, provision for our families and freedom from want, fear and harm. This does not negate us carrying our cross daily, and it is not a blank check written on some divine bank account. But we need to question our knee-jerk reaction against any reference to prosperity and appreciate that many churches that preach a prosperity-tinged gospel also teach responsible stewardship: budgeting, giving sacrificially to the church, being involved in the community and saving money—concepts few Mennonites could argue with. With these realities in mind, I suggest it is to our own peril that we simply dismiss the prosperity gospel as non-Christian. Perhaps we will not start reciting the tithe declaration anytime soon in our churches, but maybe we should consider whether we have cut God off from a part of our life over which he wants to be Lord. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Phoenix in 2013 but with satellite option

Executive Board plans for new way of doing business at Pittsburgh 2011.

Mennonite Church USA's convention in 2013 will be held in Arizona. During its Jan. 7-9 meeting in Tampa, Fla., the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board affirmed the decision to hold the convention in Phoenix, a site first selected in January 2009. However, the EB also committed to finding ways to offer an additional location for delegates who will not attend "because of conscience or concerns for safety," due to the state's controversial immigration law.

Thirteen board members voted for the recommendation and three against it. Two Executive Board members were absent. Prior to the decision, the EB and its staff spent several hours deliberating about the decision in closed sessions over two days. They shared personal stories, asked difficult questions, prayed, worshipped and brainstormed creative ways to address the fact that some delegates will not attend.

"We are committed to work on creative ways to include those delegates who because of conscience or concerns for safety will be unable to gather with the church in Phoenix," says the EB's resolution on the decision, "and at a minimum to find a satellite location at which delegates can participate in the delegate work of the assembly."

The EB also reaffirms its commitment to 11 action items described in the recommendation regarding the churchwide convention in 2013 (www.mennoniteusa.org/Portals/0/Convention2013/2013Recommend.pdf).

In a December 2010 letter sent to Mennonite Church USA leaders, Iglesia Menonita Hispana leaders made it clear they still want to abstain from Arizona.

The first-ever meeting of Mennonite racial/ethnic leaders met the day after the EB meeting in a gathering called "Hope for Change ... Hope for the Future" (see page 38). More than a dozen of these attendees met with the EB on Jan. 9 to discuss the decision.

Carlos Romero, director of Mennonite Education Agency, asked about the "satellite location" and if it is intended for delegates only, other adults or youth.

Glen Guyton, Mennonite Church USA staff member, said that plans for a satellite location for the 2013 convention are still in the early stages. The convention staff will invite input on what it should look like.

Pittsburgh experiment: At Pittsburgh 2011, the Delegate Assembly may set aside church statements and spend its time in conversation, discernment and missional church discussions instead.

During its meeting, the EB also passed a recommendation for a new model of "ongoing discernment rather than a more mainline denominational model adopting church statements that may be viewed as controlling rather than empowering," according to the board docket. Mennonite Church Canada has worked at this model at their gatherings.

J. Richard (Dick) Thomas, Mennonite Church USA's moderator-elect, said he hopes delegates see this experiment as empowering to delegates. Thomas said some delegates enjoy the debate and will miss that, but others hesitate to be delegates because of that culture.

"You do not gain by forcing everyone to talk about controversial things," Thomas said. "The important question is, How does this experiment enhance our journey to be a missional church?"

As one part of this experiment, Conversation Rooms planned for Pittsburgh 2011 will offer a place for mediated dialogue on topics such as human sexuality, immigration and more. (See October 2010 issue of *The Mennonite*)

"We see [the rooms] as an extension of the delegate body," Thomas said. "Conversation Rooms would be open and functioning for delegates to attend."

Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, supports the Pittsburgh Experiment recommendation because "missional church theology calls us to do things differently," he said.

However Diller described three responses he predicts delegates may have to the recommendation: First, some will say this recommendation is a way to keep delegates from doing their work. Second, there are histories of various bodies working in different ways. Third, some people are accustomed to Robert's Rules of Order and will miss using them.

> You do not gain by forcing everyone to talk about controversial things.
> —Dick Thomas

"We're going to have to have two or three alternate plans," he says. "It's an easy decision to make and a hard one to implement."

Board members affirmed and expressed excitement for the recommendation.

Addie Banks, a member of the EB executive committee, said, "This experiment will have delegates enter into a missional church experience. People will come away with that."

The Executive Board's next meeting is April 14-16 at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.—*Anna Groff*

90 leaders of color gather in Tampa

Intergenerational conversations include stories that are disturbing, inspiring.

For the first time since 1974, Mennonite leaders of color from across the denomination gathered to worship, fellowship and have intentional conversation about the direction of Mennonite Church USA and people of color's participation in it. Meeting Jan. 9-11 in Tampa, Fla., those gathered represented a broad range of leadership positions across the church (board members, college faculty and staff, Instituto Biblico Anabautista students and parachurch organization staff) as well as the directors and members of various constituency groups (Iglesia Menonita Hispana, African-American Mennonite Association and Native Mennonite Ministries).

History forms us: The Minority Ministries Council was a part of the (former) Mennonite Church's Department of Home Missions and was charged with the task of inter-ethnic collaboration and dismantling racism in the broader church. Minority Ministries Council gave birth to constituency organizations now part of Mennonite Church USA. Much has changed since its 1975 dissolution. At that time, there were few leaders of color and fewer Mennonite churches of color.

Today nearly half of the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA includes people of color. According to Conrad Kanagy's 2006 survey, churches termed racial/ethnic within Mennonite Church USA are the fastest growing sectors of the church. For example, the Southeast Mennonite Conference—covering Florida, South Carolina and Georgia—has five constituent ethnicities. Antiracism advocates have worked to get that diversity reflected on the conference board. However, racism still exists in Mennonite structures and covertly in individual hearts and minds. On this account, as much as things have changed, they have also stayed the same. The wounds produced by negative encounters with European-American ethnocentric behaviors and structures of Mennonite Church USA and its predecessor organizations are still fresh.

Intergenerational dialogue: The Tampa gathering was an opportunity for these and other stories to be shared. In their telling, healing began, as well as a passing of the baton. A sense of the continuity of experience between older and younger leaders of color pushed back against the feelings of isolation and frustration evoked by the stories.

Maria Teresa Davis, Instituto Biblico Anabautista student from New York, breathed a sigh of relief, saying, "I thought I was the only one that struggled."

Approximately 90 people registered for the event, which was carried out on a shoestring budget. Even in the wake of frustration caused by the Executive Board decision to host Mennonite Church USA's 2013 convention in Phoenix (see page 37), the biblical story of God's reconciliation encouraged the gathered to be hopeful for the future of the church.

Carol Roth

Marisa Alemán-Cantú of Rock Island, Ill., and Natalie Francisco of Hampton, Va., lead worship at the gathering in Tampa on Jan. 10.

Intergenerational pairs shared their stories with the group during the three worship sessions. Sixteen table groups then used a circle process to discuss what was particularly inspiring or disturbing about the stories, what lessons each learned from the stories and how these stories (in addition to each person's own experience and theology) could inform the future in the church.

At this time, Asian-American and Asian immigrant churches do not have a constituency group but have representatives on the Intercultural Relations Council. African immigrant churches recently began organizing; unfortunately no members from this group were able to attend the Florida gathering.

Hope for change: One area where change is necessary is in the area of open and honest communication. A number of leaders of color said they struggle with how to interact within the Americanized Germanic Mennonite context because when difficult issues come up, conflict styles are often different. Though passion for faithfulness, justice and racial reconciliation are shared values by white leaders and leaders of color alike, these passions tend to be expressed very differently, and there is not equal respect for various types of conflict resolution and confrontation styles in the Mennonite church.

"God brought me to Mennonite Church USA, and I am not leaving," said Byron Pellecer of Houston. "[The broader church] must deal with us and the issues we bring up. We're a legitimate part of the Mennonite body."—*Sarah Thompson for* The Mennonite

This is a first: seminary courses at convention

AMBS-MC USA joint venture offers for-credit courses at Pittsburgh 2011.

In a new venture, Mennonite Church USA convention planners and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., will offer three for-credit courses at Pittsburgh 2011, Mennonite Church USA's next biennial convention, to bring opportunities for theological education to interested convention-goers.

Students and instructors will meet at designated times during the convention week—July 4-9—and students will have reading and writing assignments to complete before and after the convention.

"Convention planners asked us to consider offering for-credit resources for people coming to Pittsburgh," says Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, AMBS associate dean for leadership education. "This coincided with what we hear so often—that people who cannot come to the AMBS campus are looking for theological and ministry education.

"So we are using the convention when people are already gathering as a time to offer these hybrid courses that combine face-to-face sessions with work done at home," she says.

The courses are open to interested church leaders and laypeople; prior seminary experience is not required.

Two of the offerings are master's level courses. The two graduate-level courses are two-credit courses; students may earn an additional hour of credit for added work negotiated with the professor.

The third is an undergraduate course that is part of the Pastoral Studies Distance Education (PSDE) curriculum, a ministry training program in which pastors and lay leaders complete coursework via correspondence and meet with a local mentor.

Here are descriptions of the two graduate-level course offerings:

Principles of Youth Ministry, with Andy Brubacher Kaethler, AMBS instructor and director of !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth at AMBS.

Because many people who attend convention are involved with youth, AMBS is offering this introductory course. Sessions will be scheduled so that sponsors and youth pastors are still available to their youth.

The course can be an entry into further seminary study or can enhance ministry that people are already doing in their congregations.

Mary H. Schertz

David B. Miller

Andy Brubacher Kaethler

Michael Zehr and Lois Shenk Zehr

Thirteen Ways of looking at Zacchaeus: Luke's Quest Stories and Transformational Bible Study, with Mary H. Schertz, AMBS professor of New Testament, will focus on confessional Bible study. Schertz explains this as a way of reading the Bible "as though our lives depended on it ... and they do."

Longenecker adds: "Many pastors, including those who have previously joined in this kind of study with Mary, have found it to be helpful, challenging and nurturing of their spiritual growth. We want to extend the opportunity for this confessional Bible study to the larger and more diverse group of people who come to convention."

The undergraduate ministry course can earn the student three hours of credit:

Church and Ministry (Unit 1 of the Pastoral Studies Distance Education curriculum), with Michael Zehr and Lois Shenk Zehr, who are the usual instructors for this unit, joined by David B. Miller, AMBS associate professor of missional leadership development.

"We hear people asking for Anabaptist theological education that they can do in their contexts, and PSDE is the only English-language distance program at the undergraduate level that meets this need," Longenecker says.

The face-to-face component available at the Pittsburgh 2011 convention will enhance the study that normally is done with the instructor and students working in different locations.

More information about the courses, when they are scheduled to meet and how to register is available on the AMBS website, www.ambs.edu/pittsburgh2011. Regular tuition and fees apply; auditing is not available.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. A joint release of AMBS and Mennonite Church USA*

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

Pittsburgh 2011, the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, will be held July 4-9 in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh, Pa. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.

MMN SOOP volunteer turns rags into blankets

Elaine Yoder and friends donate 20 quilts made from recycled blue jeans.

Harold and Elaine Yoder were serving as first-time Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP) volunteers in Mashulaville, Miss., when Elaine had the idea to turn used clothing into blankets.

SOOP is a Mennonite Mission Network volunteer program for families and individuals of all ages. Working at the Mashulaville Dormitory, a house of hospitality managed by Larry and Maxine Miller, Elaine noticed the worn condition of some of the dormitory's bed linens.

Later, while sorting clothing for the ministry's thrift store, Elaine saw a growing pile of donated clothing that was unacceptable for resale.

"My wheels started turning," she says. She recognized the pile of cast-off clothing as a source of raw materials."We can turn these clothes into blankets."

Each night Elaine and Harold toted clothes back to the dormitory, where Elaine washed, dried and bagged the clothing, preparing to take it back home to Middlebury, Ind.

"For two weeks, we collected lots of materials for use in our quilts, especially blue jeans," she says. "The knees and fronts of the [jean] legs become worn and ragged, but the back of the legs is still in good shape."

As Harold drove the 13 hours back to Middlebury, Elaine busied herself in the passenger seat cutting quilt squares.

Back in Indiana, Elaine enlisted friends and strangers to help with her blanket project. From casual acquaintances at the post office to parents of her grandson's soccer teammates, Elaine soon acquired a core group of five sewing volunteers.

Mary Frye of Middlebury was recovering from surgery when Elaine approached her with an invitation to join the group.

"I love the sewing," Frye says. "I couldn't go out and do much at the time [when Elaine first approached her], but now I've got six [blanket] tops ready to finish."

LuEtta Friesen of Middlebury met Elaine at the post office. "We got to talking and learned we had both just returned from volunteer assignments," Friesen says. "She told me of her dream of making the blankets. I offered to help because it's an opportunity to help people in need and make new friends."

David Fast

Elaine Yoder, SOOP volunteer, heads a group of sewers who create blankets from cast-off clothing.

Elaine cuts the squares, Frye sews the blanket tops, and the rest of them meet once a week to tie the quilts.

So far, Elaine and her small group of friends have completed and donated about 20 quilts in just six months. The quilts have gone to Larry and Maxine Miller for the Mashulaville Dormitory and American Red Cross offices in Elkhart, Ind., and New Orleans, where they are distributed to families who have lost their homes due to house fires. When asked why they participate in the blanket project, each woman expresses a strong interest in volunteer work.

> For two weeks, we collected lots of materials for use in our quilts, especially blue jeans.
> —Elaine Yoder

Phyllis Kehr, of Wakarusa, Ind., could have been describing any one of the women in the group when she says of Elaine, "She's just got the heart of a volunteer."—*DeVonna R. Allison of Mennonite Mission Network*

Indian hospital turns 100

Dhamtari Christian Hospital celebrates anniversary with fireworks and singing

Dr. Mousam Jefferin

Participants march during the Dhamtari Christian Hospital centennial celebration on Nov. 12, 2010.

The night air in downtown Dhamtari, India, reverberated with energetic singing, cracks of fireworks and shouts in Hindi of "Hurray for Jesus Christ." It was Nov. 12, 2010, and the crowd was celebrating the 100th anniversary of Dhamtari Christian Hospital, an institution founded by Mennonite mission workers.

Anna and Del Friesen, whose parents were workers in India with Mennonite Board of Missions (a predecessor to Mennonite Mission Network) were among the revelers.

"Several hundred participants, including hospital staff and celebrants from the community and abroad started [the procession] from the hospital and walked for more than a mile to Sunderganj Mennonite Church, stopping traffic and attracting attention," Del Friesen says.

The gala continued for two more days on the grounds of the hospital, where staff hosted local and foreign visitors. One local man whose gravely ill wife was successfully treated at the hospital showed his gratitude by passing out candy during the celebration.

This festive atmosphere was a stark contrast to the conditions that greeted the first Mennonites in Dhamtari.

George Lambert arrived in India's Central Provinces in 1898 as the first relief worker sent by the former Mennonite Church. Drought and crop failures in the region, coupled with the sell-off of India's valuable rice reserves by the ruling colonialists, had led to the starvation deaths of almost a million Indian people. When torrential rains returned to the parched land, widespread flooding contaminated drinking water sources. The resulting epidemics of cholera, small pox, dysentery and malaria killed 6 million people.

As Lambert worked with the Indian people distributing grain and relief funds, he saw many opportunities for service. Upon his return home to the United States, his reports stirred the church leadership to action.

In March 1899, William Page, his wife, Anna, and Jacob A. Ressler, workers from the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board, arrived in Bombay [now Mumbai] to establish a mission presence in India. By 1900, a primitive mission station had been established by the Pages and Ressler. In six months, nearly 5,000 people received treatment in the dense shade of an 18-acre mango grove. Overwork combined with bouts of malaria strained Dr. Page's health, forcing him to return home with his family. By then it was clear the mission station needed a hospital. In November 1910, Charles D. Esch and his wife, Mina Esch, arrived in Dhamtari as medical missionaries.

North American Mennonite mission workers continued to serve and train Indian health-care professionals at Dhamtari into the 1980s as the hospital and nursing school were gradually transferred to the care and responsibility of the Mennonite Church in India. Dhamtari Christian Hospital today boasts a modern 375-bed hospital equipped with many of the latest diagnostic equipment and treatment options.

—DeVonna R. Allison of Mennonite Mission Network

'Mennonite rabbi' shares learnings

Joel Miller connects with and learns from Jewish community in Cincinnati.

Joel Miller, pastor of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship, fondly remembers the time he was referred to as a "Mennonite Rabbi."

During a class, "Faith and Suffering," that Miller audited last fall at the Hebrew Union College, the professor of the class spoke about the need for the students to speak meaningfully into the lives of people undergoing suffering. In the classroom were rabbinical students from the Reform and Conservative traditions—and Miller.

The professor said that all religious leaders face these kinds of questions, whether they are Reform rabbis, Conservative rabbis or "Mennonite rabbis."

"It was a kind gesture that put us all in a common place on a central struggle of religious faith—God's presence in the midst of suffering," Miller says. "This only happened once, but it is an occasion I'll remember with affection.

Miller's interest in Judaism stems from his seminary studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., where he felt drawn to first-century Judaism and its two main surviving branches—Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. Since Cincinnati is the historic center of Reform Judaism, Miller says he looked forward to the rich Jewish tradition and institutions of the city when he became pastor at Cincinnati Mennonite in 2006.

Other members of Miller's church are also involved in the Jewish community. Ed Diller served as a member of the advisory board of the Center for Holocaust Education. Diller is the moderator of Mennonite Church USA. Another member, John Kampen, received his doctorate and the Founders Medallion from Hebrew Union College. The award honored his work in furthering understanding between Jewish and Christian worlds. In March 2010, the Cincinnati Mennonite youth group visited the Center for Holocaust Education in the city and met with a Holocaust survivor to hear his story.

For Mennonites interested in connecting with the Jewish community, Miller says, "working together based around common values of service and loving our neighbors" offers a solid starting point. Jewish synagogues and temples offer community education events one can attend.

"When I was in Mennonite Voluntary Service in St. Louis, there were Jews, Muslims and Christians working alongside each other building houses for Habitat for Humanity," he says. "You work together, take a lunch break together, and relationships start to form. It starts us out on a foundation of common values."—*Anna Groff*

Q&A with Pastor Joel Miller

What do Mennonites most need to learn about and from Jews?

First, Jews are as diverse as most other faith traditions. Second, one thing we can learn from Jews is honesty and integrity in how we read the Scriptures. With Jews in the room, the New Testament takes on a new dimension, and we can't get away with a reading that treats Jews as the enemies of Christianity. Ultimately, the portrayal of rigid Pharisaic religion within the New Testament should be seen as a judgment against any religious system that puts tradition above compassion, rigid enforcement of rules above relationships. Both Judaism and Christianity can be guilty of this, and there are streams within both that rise above it.

Some parts of the Mennonite church are bound together as much by ethnicity and cultural customs as by faith. Have you found the same to be true in the Jewish circles you know?

Ethnic and cultural bonds are emphasized more for Jews than Mennonites. For example, an applicant seeking to enter rabbinical studies at Hebrew Union College, a liberal Jewish institution, cannot be admitted if they are in a marriage or committed relationship with a non-Jew. This is because of the importance of Jewish family modeling that is expected of leaders. It's possible for a nonethnic Jew to convert, but it is a rigorous process. One of the rabbinical students told me about the conversion process of a Mennonite who had married a Jew. It involved over a year of classes and coming before a three-person panel to answer questions, then the ritual water immersion. Mennonites often try to de-emphasize cultural and ethnic connections, but Jews celebrate theirs.

What did you learn in the class on the suffering of the Holocaust that Mennonites should know?

In the pre-Holocaust world, a righteous Jew who was suffering would be led to submit and trust that there was a greater purpose in the suffering. But after the Holocaust this was no longer a palatable option. The suffering was too great to be able to be seen as God's leading. This is a major crisis for Judaism and is indicative of the major upheaval for faith traditions during our time. Many of the traditional assumptions about God are not holding up under the lived experiences of the violence of the 20th century. Mennonites will have to come to grips with these realities and wrestle with what faith looks like in a post-Holocaust, scientific world.

The do's and don'ts of e-mail and Facebook

Mennonite communication experts share their suggestions and tips

Think of a time you said something you wish you could take back. Now think of an e-mail, text or status update you wrote that you wish you could take back. Two communication professionals offer advice on e-mail etiquette: Shirley Showalter, president of Showalter Consulting Group, and Duane Stoltzfus, a communication professor at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Don't write anything in e-mail or on Facebook, says Showalter, that you would not want to later have attributed to you in a newspaper article.

Digital communication can be both a blessing and a curse for families, friendships, work relationships and church settings. Blessings include sharing good news, including the Good News, says Stoltzfus. The ability to connect to a worldwide community is also a blessing, says Showalter.

Showalter once posted a question on Facebook asking people what associations they have with the word "home," and she received 20 comments from people in at least three countries and many states.

"I love having friends across an age span of children to elders," she says.

However, with this broad audience and instantaneous responses, digital communication may require extra care.

"We should aim for honesty, transparency and love in what we say, regardless of the channel of communication we use," says Stoltzfus.

Stoltzfus references Matthew 18:14 for communication: If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

"If [not won over], Matthew lays out other options," says Stoltzfus. "In other words, don't dash off a global e-mail or post a bitter status comment if someone has wronged you."

Describing digital communication as the "gift that keeps on giving," Stoltzfus recommends developing personal rules for managing the time one spends e-mailing, on Facebook, reading blogs and more.

"I avoid reading e-mail late at night when my perspective is skewed," he says. "At that hour, I'd just like to read a book."

Showalter also warns about the time drain that can occur with social networking.

"My daughter calls Facebook the rabbit hole," she says.—*Anna Groff*

Shirley Showalter's social networking tips:

- Facebook and Twitter are marvelous places to demonstrate servant leadership. Placing "likes," comments, retweets and mentions about other people and their posts are more important than constantly drawing attention to yourself and your activities.

- Avoid too much bragging, too frequent postings, "killing the buzz" by being too serious when others are laughing or, conversely, laughing when others are serious.

- Don't assume all your friends share your politics and theology. Good discussions can result if your convictions are carefully and sensitively presented to a group of people likely to hold a spectrum of views on any subject. Blunders occur when friends (and, more likely, relatives) become estranged because of an inability to recognize and understand differences.

- If your children are kind enough to "friend" you, try not to embarrass them by gushing about everything they do when they really wrote something with their own friends in mind.

Duane Stoltzfus's email etiquette tips:

- E-mail works best when the message is brief, clear and timely. In dealing with a sensitive or complicated situation, talk in person or over the phone.

- E-mail messages are best when they're conversational but efficient. State your message succinctly and then sign off.

- Exercise care in using the cc (carbon copy) function. Some people are fond of copying everyone in leadership when they have a complaint or suggestion for someone else, which is unhelpful.

- Assume that the e-mail will one day be read by everyone, including the person named in the email and with whom you may have an issue. You may be tempted to write, "You'll never guess what our pastor said on Sunday." The whole world, including your pastor, may eventually see it.

- If you are feeling testy with someone because of an e-mail someone sent you, wait at least 24 hours to respond.

Major changes at Mennonite Central Committee

MCC Binational to be disbanded; some programs shift to MCC Canada

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is the largest and most influential Anabaptist organization in the world. It has nearly 1,200 workers and an annual budget of $82 million. It's reach extends to 62 countries abroad, and in North America it encompasses 14 denominations, covering the spectrum from Amish grandmothers to a Brethren in Christ megachurch.

The fact that MCC is so prominent says much about who we are as Mennonites. We are not centered around an academic institution, a geographical location (like the Vatican), a leader or even our church conferences. Rather, the closest we have to a core is a collective, practical expression of Christian care. We are people who help, and much of our helping is done through MCC.

Given the centrality of MCC, its four-year revisioning process should be of interest to us. The New Wine/New Wineskins initiative, which started in 2008, has brought together a total of 2,000 people from 50 countries at 60 meetings to give input to the evolution of MCC. To date, MCC has invested about $850,000 in its effort to make the process as thorough and broad as possible.

Though the likely outcomes of the process are fairly clear, and the consultation phase is over, final decisions have yet to be made, and implementation is only expected to be completed in early 2012.

From the beginning, Wineskins was a two-headed process accountable to international partners. The other issue at play has been how to "make more space for national differences between Canada and the [United States]," to use MCC director Arli Klassen's words. That's code for the fact that the Canadian branch of MCC is eager to oversee more international programming from Winnipeg, Manitoba, instead of sending two thirds of the money raised in Canada to Akron, Pa., where most administration of international programming now happens (roughly half of overall MCC income is generated in Canada). It's also code for the fact that MCC in Canada accepts millions in government money, while MCC in the United States does not accept government money, thus keeping its distance from U.S. foreign policy.

Two main outcomes have emerged. First, MCC's Canadian office will most likely be granted its wish to administer a significant proportion of MCC's international programming from Winnipeg (in addition to the smaller pieces of that work they already do). In simple terms, considerably more of MCC's programs will be overseen from Winnipeg instead of Akron. Little will change from the standpoint of MCC supporters or the people MCC works with abroad. And MCC's provincial and regional offices will not undergo significant changes.

In insider lingo, the working proposal is that MCC Binational be disbanded, with its work given over to MCC Canada and MCC U.S. These two branches of MCC would maintain their own boards but would work collaboratively and with a single identity overseas. A new council would oversee overall governance of MCC, guide the vision, set standards and "protect MCC's brand," says Klassen. The council would have as few as seven members—including MCC Canada and MCC U.S. representatives, as well as church and international voices—and no more than five staff in a location yet to be determined.

Theoretically, the shift would facilitate smoother and closer relations between MCC's Canada office and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)—the federal government's foreign aid department—though changes at CIDA may mitigate this trend.

MCC's provincial and regional boards, as well as the denominational conferences that ultimately "own" MCC, will have a role in approving changes. The approval process and the complex task of figuring out how to divide the work between Canada and the United States are expected to take much of 2011. Ron Mathies, who served as MCC director for nine years, suggests three questions for assessing the value of the reorganization. First, "Will international program delivery improve or become more complex due to duplication and conflict?" Second, "Will MCC remain one organization, two or many?" He adds that ongoing scrutiny of MCC's relationship with the federal government is important.

The rich help the poor: The more interesting Wineskins issue is about "what it means to be accountable globally in today's world," to quote Klassen. How can the people most affected by MCC decisions be more a part of those decisions? The matter could be framed more broadly. Being a rich and powerful North American organization creates an awkward imbalance between the helpers and those who are helped. The Wineskins question about global accountability was an important way of grappling with the inherent awkwardness and complexity of the rich helping the poor.

"Our temptation is to think of ourselves as possessing what other people need," says Earl Martin, who served 25 years with MCC. There is some truth in this, but how can we have authentically mutual relationships with sisters and brothers around the world when we are always the helpers and they are always the helped? This imbalance of roles can lead to self-importance and erosion of dignity.

In this context, a fundamental reshaping and "globalization" of MCC was on the table from the beginning of the Wineskins process. One of the main models considered was for a variety of overseas Anabaptist service agencies to come together under the MCC umbrella, with the expanded global MCC possibly being based outside North America.

This general concept was on the table when 27 Anabaptist church and service groups from 18 countries met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last August. The global organizations at the gathering opted not to be part of an expanded MCC.

"People were very grateful to MCC," says Pakisa Tshimika, MWC's global church advocate, but they did not want to "take MCC and turn it into a global entity." The groups decided to work toward greater collaboration within a formal network, but they did not want to become "little MCCs," says Tshimika. They did not want MCC to globalize in the way it had been considering.

It was a sobering moment for MCC. But the organization seems to have taken it well.

"It was humbling to be told we are not the center of the Anabaptist service world," Klassen says. The new global network is "not going to be within MCC [or have] an MCC identity," she says.

Tshimika, who is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, uses the word "imperialistic" to characterize the MCC-centered option that was rejected. He is also clear that the decision of the group was not a rejection of MCC itself—which received affirmation—but of the approach it had been considering. He says MCC took the message "very seriously."

So MCC will not "take on an entirely different shape," a hope Klassen expressed in 2008. International representatives will likely be added to the MCC Canada and MCC U.S. boards, and the global entity envisioned at the Addis Ababa consultation will provide another element of international accountability, but MCC will remain a North American organization, something Mennonite World Conference (MWC) had been advising for years.

Elephant and mouse: Mathies says that in terms of MCC's global accountability, the key question now is the future relationship between MCC and MWC. MWC is the only Anabaptist body, Mathies says, with a truly global mandate. Despite its unmatched mandate, it is dwarfed by MCC in terms of budget and capacity (MWC's annual budget is $1.4 million and has 26 staff, 22 of whom are based in North America or Europe).

Tshimika uses the elephant and mouse metaphor to describe MCC's prominence in the realm of global Anabaptist organizations. Despite this, he says that in Addis Ababa, it felt like "everyone was on the same level." This speaks to the potential for MWC to create a forum in which MCC can practice genuine mutuality.

Though the global Anabaptist church, in the form of MWC, provides the most logical forum of international accountability for MCC, it also has limitations. First, not nearly all of MCC's overseas partners or aid recipients fall under the MWC umbrella. MWC cannot represent MCC partners who are not Mennonite or Christian. A further limitation is expressed by some people within MCC who feel closer ties to MWC that in certain circumstances MCC would give preference to MWC-affiliated partners rather than non-Mennonite partners who may be better suited to particular initiatives.

In a presentation at MCC's 90th anniversary, Mathies articulated something of this tension by asking, "Will MCC try to become a more effective NGO, or will it serve the church?" Stated differently: Is the mission of MCC to raise as much money as possible and help as much as possible, or is it to foster mutually enriching exchanges between the two halves of what Mathies calls MCC's "twofold constituency": the North American donor churches and the "program partners and participants around the world?"

The answer is some of both, but sometimes the two conflict. For example, an effective way for MCC to maximize donations is to tell feel-good, noncomplicated stories that cast North Americans as noble helpers. But such stories maintain the divide between helper and helped.

A humble, unifying role: MCC also has an outstanding record of fostering unity and exchange among an exceptional diversity of people. This ability is surely one of MCC's greatest strengths. Perhaps MCC can address the global accountability question—which is also a question of authentic human equality and mutuality—not only by adjusting organizational charts but by doing more to show North Americans how much the rest of the world has to offer them.

MCC is 'not the center of the Anabaptist service world.'—Arli Klassen

Ron Mathies and Earl Martin are passionate when speaking about how the different parts of MCC's twofold constituency "desperately need each other," as Mathies puts it. He says people "in the Global North have material resources, and those in the Global South have spiritual resources that require exchange for their mutual benefit."

While MCC has been good at listening, the Addis Ababa gathering called the organization, and by extension its North American supporters, to a deeper humility. Part of the lesson was that the awkwardness and complexity of its role as the "elephant" will not be done away with by simply globalizing organizational structures. A shift in posture here at home may be the more important factor.

Klassen says that in Addis Ababa, MCC personnel were challenged "to let go of some of [their] ideas." Perhaps that also captures what MCC's North American supporters can take from the Wineskins process and the Addis Ababa gathering.—*Will Braun is a freelance writer. This article first appeared in the Nov. 29, 2010, issue of* Canadian Mennonite *and is reprinted with permission.*

Binational organizations balance national dynamics

While there is a separate Mennonite Church USA and a separate Mennonite Church Canada, four organizations—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Mennonite Publishing Network, Mennonite Men and Native Mennonite Ministries—have one foot in each. The Mennonite e-mailed a survey to each of these organizations, and here are some of the responses.

Binational organizations must consider the cultural contexts of the people they serve in each country, representation of board and staff and the language used in communication pieces.

For example, what cultural differences might a Canadian seminary student face when attending AMBS, located in Elkhart, Ind.? They may be surprised by the way religious and political views are intertwined in the United States, since Canada remains more secularized. In Canada, more people talk about militarism and ecology in the church without the same political polarization that often occurs in the United States.

"The cultural contexts of the two nations are strikingly different," says a Dec. 13, 2010, statement from AMBS. "Civil religion is widespread in the United States. "In Canada, religious affiliations are more black and white; either you go to church or you don't. In the United States, it is more gray [and] it is more culturally acceptable to be religious."

Canadian and U.S. views of racism and the African-American experience in the two contexts differ. "Racism looks different in Canada," said the statement prepared by several administrative staff from AMBS. "[Canadians] experience a much wider embrace of multiculturalism."

Also, Canadian students in the United States hear much less about the Russian Mennonite experience, which may feel fresh to them.

Canadian students may also think that the tuition at U.S. school is "exorbitant," since federal support for Mennonite schools in Canada is substantial. They may also face immigration-related challenges, especially within the last 10 years.

Finally, they may ask, "Am I an international student?" and wonder where they fit in when it comes to student groups established for support and fellowship.

Since AMBS graduated more than 50 Canadian students from the Master of Arts and Master of Divinity degree programs in the last 10 years, the administration at AMBS keeps the binational dynamics at the forefront.

AMBS communication personnel deliberately tailor content to "reflect the different national contexts." For example, fund-raising letters include altered messages to reflect different legalities and financial realities. AMBS also maintains a Canadian bank account.

"Some Canadians feel strongly that they don't want money to go south of the border, so are sometimes reluctant to support U.S.-based institutions," said the statement.

Being binational also means remembering the language differences. Some examples: What Mennonite Church USA calls "conference" and "Native Americans" MC Canada calls "area church" and "first nation aboriginals."

"We believe we have, by far, the most active interface between the two denominations of any denominational institution," said the AMBS statement. "In leadership education for the church ... AMBS is playing a significant role in that effort."

Mennonite Publishing Network:

Mennonite Publishing Network staff, whether located in the United States or Canada, are required to view their work through a binational lens, says Ron Rempel, MPN's executive director.

"Even though there are more similarities than differences between MC USA and MC Canada," Rempel says, "the differences that do exist create a built-in sensitivity to the need for contextualizing church resources."

The need to balance binational interest will continue and perhaps increase, as Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network, make plans to merge to form a new binational organization. The date for the two organizations to be consolidated into one is July 1.

While both national entities adhere to the same *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and Vision: Healing and Hope statement, Rempel says, "I suspect there is a similar degree of theological diversity within each of the national conferences."

Amy Gingerich, editorial director for MPN, says she avoids categorizing theological differences in national terms for Canada and the United States.

"There is a wide theological spectrum in each denomination, and we at MPN always seek to widen the middle," Gingerich says.

Several of MPN's periodicals (*Rejoice!*, *Purpose* and *Leader*) have editorial committees with members representing the United States and Canada. Gingerich says they try to pay attention to the "breadth of voices in our denominations."

She says the sales of Sunday school materials for Mennonite Church Canada churches dropped lower than sales in Mennonite Church USA churches.

"We're not sure of all the reasons," Gingerich says. "Does it have to do with different vacation patterns? Is there a greater degree of secularization in Canadian than in U.S. society?"

As at AMBS, language to describe people

Rebecca Y. Wenger

Northern Cheyenne women and children dance at a mini-pow-pow during the Native Mennonite Ministries Assembly in Ashland, Mont., on July 22, 2010.

groups matters. According to Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada leaders refer to churches "with multiple cultures and ethnicities, even within the so-called dominant group," instead of using the term "racial/ethnic," the term used by leaders in the United States.

Numbers show that the cultural mix in each country does differ: Canada has a higher percentage of Asians than the United States, and the United States has a higher percentage of African-Americans than Canada does, Rempel says.

With the 2002 formation of two national denominations, more energy has gone into planning within each country than into partnership work, says Rempel.

"This leaves MPN with the challenge of trying to engage the issues and program needs of two parent bodies," he says.

The binational aspect of MPN enables it to produce better work, says Gingerich. "It forces us to do more market research on possible new products than if we were only based in Canada or in the United States," she says.

Native Mennonite Ministries:

Native Mennonite Ministries (NMM) is a partner with the Native Ministry of Mennonite Church Canada; they hold joint Native assemblies every two years. The organizations work together on the issues facing both groups on their reservations and reserves, says Carol Roth, staff leader for NMM from Clinton, Miss.

The leaders of both groups wish they could meet in Canada for council meetings and Native assemblies more often.

"We would love to meet in Canada," says Roth. "With the challenge of passports, [U.S. members] do not get up to Canada very often."

Roth and her husband, Mark, are staff leaders for NMM along with Neill and Edith von Gunten of the Native Ministry of Mennonite Church Canada. The von Guntens wrote in an e-mail response that the two organizations want to continue to associate despite the differing structures of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

"They have many things in common that span the border," they said, "and can identify with each other's hearts so easily. Knowing there is a wider network encourages all these small congregations to keep going (on both sides of the border), and relationship-building has been so important."

While the differences in political landscapes in the United States and Canada bring different political realities to Native communities, said the von Guntens, U.S. and Canadian groups have more similarities than differences when it comes to theology.

"We are impressed with the similarities in cultural teachings between the various cultural groups," says the von Guntens. "[But] geographical adaptation brings out different expressions."

Mennonite Men:

Don Yoder is the staff person for Mennonite Men in the United States, and Marv Baergen is his Canadian counterpart. "While bigger is not always better, in this case resources shared across the border make the organization strong," Yoder says.

In 1950, Mennonite Men began in Kansas as an auxiliary in the General Conference Mennonite Church to provide service opportunities spawned by men returning from experiences with Civilian Public Service and overseas relief work.

"As a result, U.S. congregations east of the Mississippi have little or no historical perspective or knowledge of Mennonite Men," Yoder says. "In Canada, the Eastern Provinces mirror the states of eastern U.S."—*Anna Groff*

Binational partnership activities

- Mennonite Publishing Network
- Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Denominational ministry staff members meet annually in joint sessions.
- Christian Witness Council and Mennonite Mission Network program partnerships
- Native, Hispanic, Asian constituency groups span Canada-U.S. border.
- Mennonite Men and Mennonite Women USA/ Canadian Women in Mission cross border.
- Both national conferences participate in Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Christian Peacemaker Teams.

—*Executive Board Docket, January*

Elevated gardens offer food sustainability

Grand Bayou community initiates project; Mennonite Disaster Service helps

Gerald Epp

Ruby Ancar gets into the boat at the dock in front of her home in the Grand Bayou in Louisiana.

Cage-like baskets used for military fortification during warfare are now used by residents to help sustain their way of life on the marshes of the Grand Bayou, La.

HESCO Bastian Baskets have been used on beaches and marshes to help reduce land erosion and protect soil from storm surges. The people on the Grand Bayou, however, are assembling these baskets for another reason—creating elevated gardens.

From the perspective of Bayou residents, oil penetration and soil contamination continue to make life on the Bayou difficult.

During the oil spill that severely impacted the Gulf Coast, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) asked Bayou residents, "How can we help?" They responded with a project their community independently initiated and designed prior to the oil spill—the raised-bed gardens project.

Prior to the oil spill, coastal erosion and soil pollution already limited the Bayou people's ability to grow healthy gardens. The oil spill, however, made the issue of food sustainability an ever-increasing priority. Many residents are now looking to substitute their seafood diet with plant food. Raised-bed gardens are one way to improve their food quality and help them move toward self-sustainability.

While local media in Louisiana report that since the fishing and shrimping industry has reopened and is operating at about 20 percent of normal capacity, the long-term effects of the oil remain uncertain and often controversial in spite of clean water testing.

Ruby Ancar, a long-term resident of the Bayou community, decided to stay away from local seafood. "I don't know what the long-term effects will be, but I am not willing to take that risk."

"The raised-bed gardens that surround my house will help me with my grocery bill, especially since our seafood quality has been threatened," Ancar says.

Earlier this year, the Bayou community received a grant from Heifer USA that paid for the HESCO Bastian Baskets, the trucking of the soil, the 20-by-70-foot barge rental and cost of the boat and operator to push the barge between loading and unloading sites. Narin Enterprises donated 300 cubic yards of soil. MDS responded to the Bayou community's request to transport the soil to Ancar's house and into the baskets. It took 13 days to complete the project.

Ancar's home, the first house repaired by MDS following Hurricane Katrina, is serving as the pilot project for the elevated gardens. "So far I've planted mustard seeds, and after winter my goal is to grow tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplants." Ancar's home, surrounded by baskets that each hold one cubic yard of soil, and linked together by a chain-linked fence, has two primary functions; to plant personal self-sustaining gardens and to protect her land from debris buildup during storm surges.—*Brian K. Pipkin of MDS*

Remembering Glen Lapp, killed MCC worker

Lapp's father, brother and cousin witness 'life' he brought to Afghanistan.

Two months after Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Glen Lapp and nine other aid workers were killed in rural Afghanistan, Lapp's father, Marvin, brother Jerry and cousin Joe were welcomed in the guesthouse in Kabul where Glen had lived. They took part in an Oct. 1 memorial service for the 10 who died Aug. 5, 2010.

But they also were able to visit the office where Glen helped arrange logistics for rural eye camps. Following Glen's example, they carried a banana and toffee pie to four friends who lived nearby.

And through each encounter, the Lapps got a better feel for Glen's efforts in Afghanistan.

"I frequently imagined how Glen must have done this or that thing, how he interacted with people, how he was able to do what needed to be done," Marvin Lapp says.

Glen Lapp, 40, and other members of a team formed by MCC partner International Assistance Mission, which provides eye care and medical treatment in Afghanistan, were returning from a journey to hold an eye camp in a rural area when they were killed in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province.

For the Lapps, the trip offered a window into Glen's world and showed how the same qualities that friends in Lancaster, Pa., remember Glen for also were prized by friends in Afghanistan.

"Everyone acknowledges living in Kabul or Afghanistan is very challenging," says John Williamson of MCC. Glen, however, was one of the most active in reaching out to his colleagues. "He brought a lot of life."

Williamson, who accompanied the Lapps on this trip, was told that Glen was known for being conscientious about checking in with security personnel and following any warnings he was given. But he also didn't let fear keep him from living vibrantly. He led a Monday morning exercise group. He took time to play with fellow workers' children. He and a colleague helped organize volleyball tournaments.

And when security allowed, he and others would go into nearby hills for hikes. Hiking and biking were such passions for Glen that those who attended his memorial service in Lancaster, Pa., were invited to bike there. But hiking with someone in Afghanistan requires a far different level of trust than outdoor excursions in a more secure setting—and colleagues chose to place that trust in Glen.

For all his sense of adventure, Glen didn't take the prospect of serving in Afghanistan lightly. When the assignment opened in Afghanistan, he and his parents, Marvin and Mary Lapp, talked not only about the opportunities in going but also with each other and with MCC about the risks.

"It wasn't always easy thinking about Glen being there, but it was a choice we had made," his mother says.

From conversations through e-mail and Skype, his parents could sense how much he liked spending time with village leaders to work out the details of eye camps.

"It was clear he was well suited for the job he was doing," Joe Lapp says. "I've been on bike trips with him where he would be easily able to pick a good route and adapt to locally changing conditions, chat people up for information, take the lead on logistics for food and lodging and competently and quickly solve problems along the way."

Glen was gifted at languages and knew a smattering of Dari, a primary language of Afghanistan, from a previous trip to Afghanistan in 2004.

When Glen began his assignment in 2008, he was needed in the office immediately, so language study had to wait. Glen used the time to practice on his own, building relationships with Afghan workers in the house in the IAM compound where he lived. When the Lapps visited, a co-worker recalled that Glen's language skills developed as fast as those of colleagues who spent their days in Dari classes.

Dark-haired, Glen grew a beard and often dressed in traditional Afghan garb. One of Glen's Afghan coworkers told the Lapps how he had taken Glen to a local park to play volleyball. He worried Glen would feel uncomfortable because so much attention would be paid to him as a foreigner. But Glen showed up in a shalwar kameez, a traditional outfit of loose-fitting pants and shirt, and played volleyball, and "nobody ever realized he was a foreigner," Joe Lapp says.

Glen Lapp's term was scheduled to end in October 2010. He was eager to come home—in part, his parents say, to rekindle relationships with the nieces and nephew he treasured so much. But, according to Joe Lapp, Glen also was strongly drawn to reach out to meet the needs of people around the world.

"Frankly, I don't think he would have been home for long," Joe says. "I think the pull of life in Afghanistan, or if not there some other similarly need-rich location, would have taken him back to a place where he could daily use his skills to directly improve the lives of people in need."

—Marla Pierson Lester of Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite farmer travels to North Korea

Doug Zehr says the trip turned many of his 'preconceptions on their heads.'

Just three days after the Nov. 23, 2010, shelling of the disputed South Korean island of Yeongpyeong sparked increased tensions between North and South Korea, Doug Zehr got on a plane. His destination: Pyongyang, North Korea.

Zehr had heard about a delegation to review agricultural programs in North Korea headed up by the American Friends Service Committee. Zehr, a farmer and former Mennonite Central Committee volunteer, was intrigued.

"My initial reaction was 'wow, a person can really go to North Korea?'" says Zehr of Gibson City, Ill.

He was surprised to discover that American visits to North Korea are legal by both U.S. and North Korean law—so long as travelers work through a travel agency. Hoping to learn more about an unfamiliar part of the world, Zehr applied to be part of the team and was accepted. When it came time to leave, Zehr wondered if the delegation would be canceled because of the conflict. It was not, and he arrived in North Korea by way of Beijing on Dec. 2, 2010, and stayed until Dec. 11.

The American Friends Service Committee has been working with four cooperative farms in North Korea since the early 1990s. The organization's main focus is on agricultural development. They work with farm operators on issues like effective use of cover crops and how to improve soil fertility.

This emphasis is important, Zehr says, because North Korean farmers aren't interested in handouts.

"They seem a little bit like the Amish because they have such a self-reliant philosophy," he says.

Zehr says the Korean mindset tends to be one of, "We do not depend on the outside for anything. We build ourselves up by our own strength."

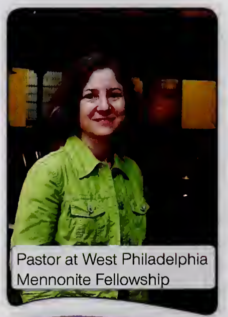
That said, the AFSC does provide some material assistance to North Korea. In 1997, for example, they gave Korean farmers several hundred pounds of fertilizer. This was possible because they had a standing relationship with Korean farmers. "It's like we're friends, and friends help each other," says Zehr.

Being in North Korea turned many of Zehr's preconceptions on their heads. For one thing, North Korean Christians meet openly, and Zehr's group was able to attend a Sunday

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

DISCOVERY COMMUNITY RESPECT SERVICE

www.bluffton.edu
1 University Drive • Bluffton, OH 45817


Pastor at West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship

Seminary graduate
Lorie Hershey '05
Called to urban ministry...

Discern your call

(800) 710-7871
Harrisonburg, Va.
emu.edu/seminary

EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY

morning worship service. And though the average North Korean may disagree with American politics, they were very welcoming to the AFSC team, feeding them with rabbit, seafood, plenty of rice and kim-chi, a cabbage dish that is "spicy and probably along the line of sauerkraut."

He recognizes that this generosity stemmed at least partially from farmers' gratitude to the AFSC, but Zehr says it went beyond just that.

"Koreans seem to me to be very hospitable people," Zehr says. "Over and over, the theme was they don't have anything against the United States. They had issues with the government of the United States."

Zehr also saw the challenges North Koreans face every day. The most apparent of these were constant energy shortages. Fuel and energy are strictly rationed. Vehicle use is minimal. Tractors are used as little as possible. Many buildings they entered were not heated.

"The issue of energy is so extreme," Zehr says. "You go into public buildings and you see your breath. You understand what not having enough energy is about."

For Zehr, it cast the question of nuclear energy in a new light. Many Koreans see it as their only option since other sources of power are scarce. He wonders if different technology could allow North Korea to build nuclear reactors without the threat of creating nuclear warheads.

More importantly, though, he hopes that Americans and Koreans will find ways to move past their mutual fear.

"We're all God's children." Zehr says. "Whether or not they fall under this strange leadership, we should do everything in our power to communicate with the human side."

"If people would just experience what the culture was like, I think that would dispel a lot of the fear." he adds. "That's certainly how it was for me."—*Paul Boers*

Photo provided

Doug Zehr (on the right) enjoys a meal during a delegation to North Korea.

BE MORE THAN A TOURIST

2011 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 6 - 16)
JAMAICA - ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS (January 28 - February 6)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS IN KENYA & TANZANIA (February 7 - 18)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE TOUR (February 23 - March 5)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 20 - April 2)
MEDA IN MOROCCO (March 25 - April 5)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (April 27 - May 6)
EXPLORE THE WORLD OF PAUL WITH TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4 - 20)
LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE (May 11 - 24)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13 - 22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE WITH JOHN RUTH (June 23 - July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22 - August 4)
MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE WITH EDGAR STOESZ (September 19 - 28)
A PILGRIMAGE TO PORTUGAL (September 20 - 30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND WITH THE LEDERACHS (September 22 - October 3)
FROM NAZARETH TO ROME (November 10 - 22)
BEHIND THE VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT WITH MEDA (November 14 - 26)

2012 TOURS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (February 3 - 23)
TOUR TO GUATEMALA (February 24 - March 4)
MEXICO & ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9 - 18)
FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF MOSES (April 16 - 27)
GLORY OF RUSSIA: MOSCOW TO ST. PETERSBURG (July 3 - 13)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com
9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada
Reg. #50014322
2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

Recipe for disaster:
1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS
Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Many issues impact building in Haiti

Complexities in building homes range from accessibility to escalating prices.

Silas Crews

COLLEGE NOUVE

Structural engineer James Mwangi (seated) and a team of Haitian engineers and masons inspect a building that was part of a project that includes home repair for 200 people living with disabilities.

Rebuilding houses in post-earthquake Haiti seems like it should be a simple, straightforward task. In a country where more than 1 million people are still homeless after an earthquake devastated the capital city of Port-au-Prince a year ago and in a country that is regularly battered by hurricanes, the concept is only logical.

Some Haitian masons, contractors and architects already know the techniques, and others quickly absorb the information provided by James Mwangi, an engineering professor who is spending his 2010-2011 sabbatical working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Haiti.

But that's where the simplicity stops and the complexity begins. One reason is that only about one-third of the $10.2 billion promised by the international community has been delivered, and of that amount, only 10 percent has been spent, says Alexis Erkert Depp, advocacy coordinator for MCC Haiti. Land ownership is another major issue hampering reconstruction efforts, she says.

For MCC, this issue has not been a barrier. Instead, accessibility has been a primary obstacle, says Susanne Brown, MCC Haiti disaster coordinator. Building homes is also difficult when prices of construction supplies can double from one day to the next, Mwangi says. Location is another issue. In spite of the difficulties, MCC has committed funds for the repair and construction of 516 homes. More are expected to be funded in the future.—*Linda Espenshade for MCC*

ALBANIAN
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Albanian Christian School (ACS) seeks 2-3 high school teachers, preferably with experience, for teaching in English at ACS, in Lezhe, Albania. Terms begin August 2011. TESL experience desired but not required.

ACS offers rigorous academics in English with a Biblical worldview to prepare Albanian students to become leaders who apply Christian faith to life.

For more information, contact Rita Steiner at (540) 434-5983 or rddsteiner@gmail.com or Ken Horst at (540) 434-9727 or ken.horst@vmmissions.org
Application is at **vmmissions.org**

Both Virginia Mennonite Missions and Eastern Mennonite Missions are lending their support to this new venture along with counsel from Mennonite Education Agency.

Virginia Mennonite Missions
Called. Sent. Transformed.

I Just Moved In!
Come and see the new homes for yourself

Larry Lefever Photography

"I chose a hybrid home because of the spaciousness and the layout. It is better use of land and preserves the natural environment. I'm glad to come while I am still active so I can participate actively in community life."

Connie Stauffer
New Hybrid Home Resident

Call Donna Shank for a tour
717-581-3935
www.landishomes.org

Landis Homes
Lititz, PA

Vietnamese Mennonites lose church center

Property lost to urban redevelopment; pastor Quang reportedly beaten

Ten days before Christmas, local authorities in District Two of Ho Chi Minh City seized and demolished the home of Pastor and Mrs. Nguyen Hong Quang, leaders of the unregistered Vietnam Mennonite church.

Their home also served as a leadership training center and headquarters for the group of Mennonite congregations, that is distinct from the officially registered Hôi Thánh Mennonite Viêt Nam (Vietnam Mennonite Church).

Early on Dec. 14, 2010, through the law of eminent domain, authorities cordoned off the area and began dismantling the Quangs' home and a nearby guesthouse for visiting church leaders and students in training. Pastor Quang did not intervene. However, he reportedly was severely beaten when he objected to police taking the Bible school students into custody. Reports said that the students were sent home and told not to return. Authorities gave Quang the keys to a housing unit in a nearby rundown apartment complex for him, his wife and three children.

For nearly two decades Ho Chi Minh City has planned to develop a new city complex in Thu Thiem, the heart of District Two. The area is on the southeast side of the Saigon River, a short distance from the city's commercial center. A one-mile, six-lane tunnel under the river is to be inaugurated by mid-2011.

The Quangs, along with hundreds of other families, are losing their property in the urban redevelopment scheme. The government announced that it would compensate people who owned property in this area prior to 1992 at a certain rate. People who secured property after that date would be compensated at half that amount. The Quang family was to be compensated at the smaller rate.

Quang did not oppose the current expropriation of their property. However, he had earlier appealed to the city for additional remuneration, claiming that the proposed remuneration was only one-fourth the amount needed to secure a replacement property in the city. He also helped many of his neighbors file appeals.

The city did not budge. In September 2010, the authorities launched a public campaign against Pastor Quang in the *Saigon Giai Phong* newspaper, accusing him of constantly challenging the government. The articles heaped on him the same accusations they had used in 2003, when he was arrested for interfering in a government investigation.

The Giai Phong called him a self-appointed pastor, which was patently not true. Quang was issued a certificate of ordination by Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference in July 2004.

The unregistered Mennonite body associated with the District Two leadership includes 64 congregations with 3,500 active members, organized in five geographical areas. Most of the congregations are registered with local authorities.

Pastor Quang coordinates an extensive training and mentoring program for young leaders. His wife, Pastor Le Thi Phu Dung, is the church president.—*Luke S. Martin for Mennonite World Conference*

START
with values

Value is important, but so are values. At Hesston College, they go hand-in-hand. Hesston ranks well above the national average for helping our students develop and clarify their personal values. It's one reason why when you start here, you really can go everywhere.

Hesston College
START HERE, GO EVERYWHERE

Discover South America!

Brazil & Paraguay Tour – April 2011
Rio, Curitiba, Iguazu Falls, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies

Call for special discount!

Peru & Paraguay Tour – Sept./Oct. 2011
Lima, Machu Picchu, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies, Iguazu Falls

Contact Rudolf Duerksen at 1-204-415-6836
southway@shaw.ca
www.southwaytours.com

CALENDAR

A presentation of the cantata, "***David, the Shepherd Boy***," is being planned for 2011 as part of the "Fine Arts Series" at **Bahia Vista Mennonite Church** and will be directed by Marvin Miller. Practices will be held throughout March and the program will be presented on March 27; 6:00 p.m. All singers, both male and female, are invited to participate in this exciting and inspirational musical event. Any questions may be addressed to: Paul Wenger at pwenger4@comcast.net or call 941-870-3737.

Big Spring Mennonite Church in Luray, Va., will celebrate its ***50th Anniversary*** on June 19, 2011. Worship will begin at 10 a.m. followed by lunch and an afternoon of celebration. James Rissler pastor of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship and Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler pastor of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City will be guest speakers. A special invitation to all Young Peoples Christian Association members from Eastern Mennonite University and all others who touched the life of this church over the past 50 years. For more information contact Mark Sours at msours@embarqmail.com or 540-743-3239. Visit church website at www.bigspringmennonite.org.

WORKERS

Akerson, James, was licensed as pastor at Beldor Mennonite Church, Elkton, Va., on Nov. 7, 2010.

Brenneman, Nevin M., was ordained as deacon at Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., on Nov. 14, 2010.

Graybill, Conrad, was ordained as deacon at New Holland Mennonite Church, New Holland, Pa., on Nov. 14, 2010.

Harnish, Jay Michael, was licensed as pastor for faith development for youth and young adults at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Nov. 21, 2010.

Heistand, Daryl L., was licensed as associate pastor at Risser Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on Nov. 14, 2010.

Metcalf, Andrew S., began a term as missionary-pastor at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on Jan.1.

Newswanger, Ricky L., began a term as associate pastor at Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., on Nov. 14, 2010.

Roth-Mullett, Luke and Sarah, of Hesston, Kan., are serving three-year assignments with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Mexico City, Mexico, as connecting peoples coordinators.

Rutt, Leonard N., began a term as lead pastor at Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., on Nov. 14, 2010.

Santiago, Adalberto, was installed as lead pastor at Congregacion Menonita Shalom, New Columbia, Pa., on Dec. 12, 2010.

Williams, Paul D., was licensed as associate pastor at Mechanic Grove Mennonite Church, Quarryville, Pa., on Nov. 7, 2010.

OBITUARIES

Bachman, Frieda J. Hirschy, 92, Wayland, Iowa, died Dec. 7, 2010. Spouse: Earl A. Bachman (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Lydia Wagler Hirschy. Children: Kathleen A. Showalter, William S., Doyle E.; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Balzer, Arthur, 94, North Newton, Kan., died Dec. 12, 2010. Spouse: Louise H. Schroeder Balzer (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Emma Harms Balzer. Child: Ann Doerksen; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Birky, Marian "Loretta" Phillips, 71, Elmira, Ore., died Nov. 15, 2010, from complications of a stroke. Spouse: Jack Birky. Parents: Arthur and Tina Beck Phillips. Children: Jill Martin; Jon; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Lebanon Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Ore.

Bontrager, Viola Gingerich, 94, Shipshewana, Ind., died Dec. 11, 2010. Spouse: Christy "Crist" J. Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Jacob D. and Fannie Schrock Gingerich. Children: Betty Graber, Ida Mae Gingerich; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Brubaker, Martha Jane Reist, 96, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 2. Spouse: Roy A. Brubaker. Parents: J. Clarence and Barbara Frey Reist. Children: Donald R., Thomas A., Leon M., Virginia Lehman; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Lititz Mennonite Church.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Eicher, Elta Vinetta North, 92, Sarasota, Fla., died Dec. 15, 2010. Spouse: Olen Leander Eicher (deceased). Parents: Homer Franklin and Bertha Inez Bechtal North. Children: Jan Brunk, Caralee Eicher, Alice Massanari; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Sunnyside Village, Eicher Auditorium, Sarasota.

Falb, Priscilla Miller, 87, Dalton, Ohio, died Dec. 29, 2010. Spouse: George Falb. Parents: Melvin S. and Sadie Mast Miller. Children: Rosemary Rupp, Timothy, Rebecca Oyer, Ronald; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Gingerich, Margery, 84, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 23, 2010. Parents: Joe P. and Lula Stutzman Gingerich. Funeral: Dec. 27 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Glick, Doris Miller, 86, Pensacola, Fla., died Oct. 15, 2010. Spouse: Lester Glick. Parents: Harry and Luella Shetler Miller. Children: Ron, Dr. Cris, Pricilla Clark, Byron; eight grandchildren. A memorial service and spreading of her ashes will take place at a later date at the Memorial Garden at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

Hopkins, William "Rex," 75, Lebanon, Ore., died Nov. 24, 2010, of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Violet Yoder Hopkins. Parents: James and Mary Lunceford Hopkins. Children: Marla Ernst, Steve; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Isaak, Kathryn Becker, 96, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Dec. 4, 2010. Spouse: Peter Isaak (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Anna Boese Becker. Five step-children; numerous step-grandchildren and step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Kilmer, Willard Everett, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 31, 2010, following an extended illness. Spouse: Sarah Boardley Kilmer. Parents: Philip and Ella Kohli Kilmer. Children: Stephen Kilmer, Brian Kilmer, Linda Yoder, Patrick Trainer; five grandchildren; two step-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 4 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

King, Aaron Martin, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 3. Spouse: Betty Detweiler King (deceased). Parents: Irvin and Cora Shank King. Children: Michael, Jewel, Robert, Steven Weibe-King, Marty, Noel King, Heidi King, Starla King; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

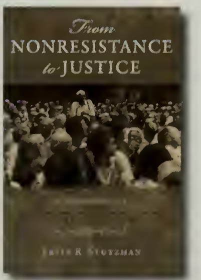
Krehbiel, Annie L. Kliewer, 86, Moundridge, Kan., died Dec. 3, 2010. Spouse: Delbert Krehbiel (deceased). Parents: Herman and Nettie Regier Kliewer Krehbiel. Children: Lynn, Joel; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at West Zion Cemetery, Moundridge.

Leinbach, Wilma Pearl Pletcher, 98, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 23, 2010, of cancer. Spouse: Etril J. Leinbach (deceased). Parents: Landan and Luella Johns Pletcher. Children: Keith, Dale, Glen; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mast, Gerald Dwaine, 67, Millersburg, Ohio, died Dec. 8, 2010, following a sudden illness. Spouse: Nila Miller Mast. Parents: Gerald O. and Frances Mast. Children: Stacey Egli, Christopher; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Miller, Atlee, Jr., 71, Hartville, Ohio, died Dec. 18, 2010. Spouse: Twila Miller. Parents: Atlee P. and Susanna Cross Miller. Children: Tracy, Terry, Diana Coblentz, Todd, Doris Yoder; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Herald Press



From Nonresistance to Justice

The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908—2008

How has the Mennonite Church, now part of MC USA, changed in regard to its beliefs and practices about peace over the past 100 years? How has it remained the same? MC USA moderator **Ervin R. Stutzman** shows how the church moved over the past century from an emphasis on nonresistance and nonconformity to engage in advocacy for peace and justice. At the same time, he presses for a greater emphasis on the way that God's activity must guide our work in the world, arguing for a stronger link between God's grace, justice, and peace.

Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series, Volume 46.

$39.99 USD/$45.99 CAD
www.mpn.net/fromnonresistance

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Miller, Mark M., 77, Denver, Colo., died Dec. 4, 2010, following a brief illness. Spouse: Ardis Phillips Miller. Parents: Evan J. and Iva Maust Miller. Children: Kay Miller, Evan; one grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 4 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Miller, Mattie Gerber, 91, Middlebury, Ind., died Nov. 13, 2010. Spouse: Crist C. Miller (deceased). Parents: John and Barbara Yoder Gerber. Children: Karen Vandermaas, Sandy Hartzler, Dalis Bloss, Steve, Barry; 14 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Miller, Sturges, 92, Millersburg, Ohio, died Dec. 11, 2010. Spouse: Bernice Meyer Miller. Parents: Joe J. and Lovina Beechy Miller. Children: Joe, Ben, John, Mark; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at Martin's Creek Mennonite; Millersburg.

Nyce, Clarence F., 89, Pipersville, Pa., died Dec. 16, 2010. Spouse: Blanche R. Rice Nyce. Parents: Wilson and Katie Nase Frank. Children: Darlene Frank, C. Merrill, Beverly Delp, L. Gerald, Timothy; 13 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Ramer, Roy Lamar, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 31, 2010. Spouse: Gloria Lucille Shank Ramer (deceased). Parents: John and Goldie Wenger Ramer. Children: Mark, Tena Baker, Tammy Funderburk; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Roberts, Naomi J. Yoder, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 30, 2010. Spouse: Roy C. Roberts (deceased). Parents: Samuel M. and Ruth Byler Yoder. Children: Sarah Holmes, Don, Rebecca Scott-Mitchell, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 2, 2011 at Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, Harrisonburg.

Ruth, Mary Ella, 100, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 20, 2010. Parents: Henry M. and Mary Grater Landes Ruth. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Schmucker, Raymond, 92, Stryker, Ohio, died Dec. 13, 2010. Spouse: Evelyn Joy Lederman Schmucker. Parents: Arthur and Sylvia Burkholder Schmucker. Children: Jeanine Stuckey, Kendra Bernath, Kelly Schmucker; two grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker.

Spenler, Helen Elizabeth, 94, Iowa City, Iowa, died Dec. 8, 2010. Parents: Chris C. and Anna Beller Spenler. Funeral: Dec. 13 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Stucky, Keith Leroy, 57, Austin, Texas, died Dec. 2, 2010, of pancreatic cancer. Parents: Howard and Mildred "Milly" Dick Stucky. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Teichroew, Emma Mary Harder, 101, Yankton, S.D., died Dec. 22, 2010. Spouse: Peter A. Teichroew (deceased). Parents: John B. and Maria Janzen Harder. Children: Harlan, Lowell, Charlotte, Allan; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Yoder, Abigail Faith, 10, Pettisville, Ohio, died Dec. 12, 2010, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Parents: Douglas and Jennifer Knight Yoder. Siblings: Stephanie Slye, Michelle Yoder, Kirstin Yoder, Tessa Yoder, Caleb, Micah, Douglas Andrew. Funeral: Dec. 20 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Yoder, Jennifer Knight, 46, Pettisville, Ohio, died Dec. 11, 2010, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Douglas Yoder. Parents: Daniel and Joyce Filer Knight. Children: Stephanie Slye, Michelle Yoder, Kirstin Yoder, Tessa Yoder, Caleb, Micah, Abigail Yoder, Douglas Andrew. Funeral: Dec. 20 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Discover what's next

Retirement living designed to enhance your life

Fran Kinney rediscovered the joy of volunteering at Dock Woods. She holds babies in the campus Children's Center.

Joining the Living Branches family has given Fran the opportunity to build new relationships and serve others.

What's next for you?

Visit www.livingbranches.org

Dock Meadows
Hatfield, PA
215-822-0688

Souderton Mennonite Homes
Souderton, PA
215-723-9881

Dock Woods
Lansdale, PA
215-368-4438

LIVING BRANCHES

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Wanted: ***marketing and sales director*** with a passion for promoting Anabaptist resources for the life and witness of the Mennonite church and beyond. For further information on this **Mennonite Publishing Network** job opening, see www.mpn.net/about/openings.html.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic retreat ministry for families and adults in northeastern Pa., seeks ***full-time retreat center director*** with an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for building relationships and pointing people toward Christ. Will direct all aspects of daily retreat center operations (guest services/sales, communications/marketing, information systems, food service, housekeeping). Assume primary leadership when executive director is absent and report to same. Prior marketing and/or retreat/camping experience preferred. Salary, liberal benefits. Resume: Executive Director, RR1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone: 800-822-7505 x 118; fax: 570-595-0328; e-mail: jobsrc10@spruce-lake.org (www.sprucelake.org).

Feed the hungry and shelter the homeless with the **Winona (Minn.) Catholic Worker** community. We are seeking light-hearted, compassionate, spiritually grounded individuals to join us in doing the Works of Mercy in our small, family-style houses of hospitality. More information at www.WinonaCatholicWorker.org or PO Box 102, Winona, MN 55987.

Camp Friedenswald is looking to fill two positions:
facilities director: oversight of and working with groundskeeping, general maintenance and special projects will be a large part of what is expected. An excitement for working collaboratively with others is imperative. This is a salaried position with housing, utilities, insurance and many meals provided. Please contact the executive director, Justin Weaver, for more information at justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744.
VS position: 9- to 12-month period; potential areas of need are IT, environmental science education, groundskeeping, mechanical work: small stipend and many meals provided. If you have interest in any of these areas please contact our Operations Director, Portia Amstutz, at portia@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744.

Washington, D.C. * April 8 - 10, 2011
Workshops * Speakers * Plenaries

PLANNING A MODEL FOR WORLD PEACE & METHODS TO IMPLEMENT IT.

EDUCATIONAL & STRATEGY CONFERENCE ON US MILITARISM

Join hundreds of people of faith, youth & students, solidarity & peace activists, teachers, labor & immigration activists, veterans & others for a Conference to End the Culture of US Militarism and Militarization of Relations with Latin America.

Come early & stay late for SOA Watch's April Days of Action (April 4-11) to Close the School of the Americas where the US trains Latin American soldiers. For more information: www.soaw.org

Sponsored by the Latin America Solidarity Coalition.
For more information & online registration visit:
www.lasolidarity.org

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

M	T	C	H	A	E	L		S	A	T	A	N
D		A		N				D		T		A
S	R	T	R	T	T		A	D	A	M		T
L		N		M		J		D		L		U
S			B	A	L	A	A	M		S		R
	B			L		M			A			A
J	L	S	U	S		L	T	L	R	N	A	L
U		A				S			C		G	
D	T	V	T	D	E				H		D	
G		T		L		B		S		R		
M		D		A	P	D	S	T	L	L	S	
L	R	R	D	R		U		A		T		D
N			W			N		R		L		A
T	D	W	N	S		D	L	S	T	R	D	Y

Farmer Ken

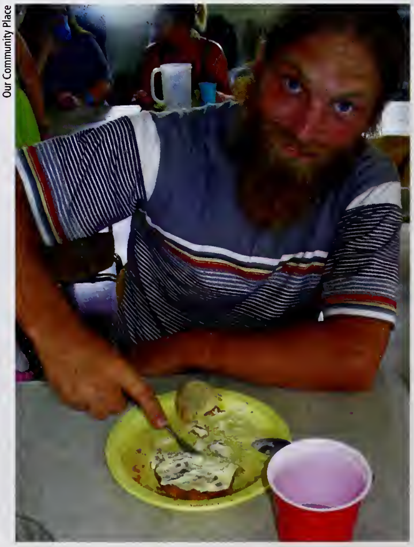
Sharon Kniss attends Early Church, a Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg, Va.

In my continuing desire—mentioned in my November 2010 column—to lose my ego, I share here not of my own thoughts but about another young adult active in the adventurous journey of following Christ.

Holding hands in a circle, seven grown men, a couple and a family share with each other what they are thankful for. Several of them are hard-core alcoholics reaching towards sobriety for the first time in a long time. Others are hard-core drug addicts, some struggle with mental illness and some are Christians—all reaching together toward recovery. They close their time of thankfulness with the Serenity Prayer and join together in lunch as a big family before Ken explains the afternoon plans.

Ken Wettig has been running a 15-acre farm since January 2010 without any prior farming experience. He admits, laughing, that he thought the difference between male and female cows had to do with horns and had no idea that "grass-fed beef" was considered a sought-after product. He and Emily, his wife, are some of the Christians at the helm in this big family.

At 6 a.m. each day, Ken wakes anyone up who had broken house rules to join him in a meditation of Psalm 23. Afterward, he leads the house in worship and breakfast, then sets everyone to the day's tasks at 8 a.m. The seven men (ranging in age from mid-20s to 60) and Ken work either at the farm or in Harrisonburg, Va., for Our Community Works, a program offering manual labor services in support of Our Community Place, the umbrella organization for the farm, also called Our Community Farm.



Our Community Place

Running a farm along with Emily, his wife, and growing family of three small children, Ken Wettig serves as mentor, pastor, boss, farmer, business manager, friend and brother. It was just another leap of faith for him.

Each day also includes specific work toward recovery from alcohol or drug addictions. During lunch, Ken leads the group in a reflection from Alcoholics Anonymous, and in the evening the guys head out to local AA or NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings, unless Ken has called a community meeting to debrief the challenges, joys and trials of living together in this Christian work recovery family/community.

"What we're seeking to do at the farm," Ken says, "is to love God, love those [God] created and love creation."

Ken didn't grow up going to church and dreaming of being a Christian farmer someday. He grew up dealing with the gritty realities of life that enslaved those around him—from broken relationships to alcoholism to incarceration. Ken drew strength from his stalwart and inspirational mother but did not know a lot about Christianity or the church until he visited a youth group at age 13. Drawn to the faith, Ken quickly became a Christian and listened as his soul stirred with a calling to ministry by the age of 16.

Ken met some radical Christians as he and Emily returned to her hometown after having served together with Youth With A Mission and later in the Middle East. These Christian friends took seriously the words of Jesus, and some lived without cars, some let drunks sleep in their houses, some went on walking pilgrimages to Jerusalem and some sold their successful restaurant to turn it into a cooperative. Ken found himself wondering, Are these just hippies who like Jesus, or are they real Christians? but quickly discovered they were people who took seriously the gospel imperatives. The farm idea emerged from Ken's own vision of starting a business employing people off the streets in the trades alongside dreams of their friends for similar recovery work.

In his spare time, Ken serves on the leadership team of Early Church, a Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg.

BEST FILMS OF 2010

1. **Inside Job**
2. **The Social Network**
3. **Winter's Bone**
4. **The Secret in Their Eyes**
5. **Toy Story 3**
6. **Fair Game**
7. **The Fighter**
8. **Waiting for 'Superman'**
9. **The Ghost Writer**
10. **Exit Through the Gift Shop**

—Gordon Houser

BEST BOOKS OF 2010

Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self by Marilynne Robinson

Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years by Diarmaid MacCulloch

Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination and History by Dale C. Allison Jr.

The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet: A Novel by David Mitchell

A Visit from the Good Squad: A Novel by Jennifer Egan—*gh*

FILM REVIEWS

The Fighter (R) is based on the true story of Micky Ward, who won the world light welterweight boxing title in 2001. It is both a boxing movie—with the typical underdog-makes-good story—and a dramatic depiction of family dynamics in a poverty culture. Though well-shot (in Lowell, Mass., where the story is set), it's the acting that carries the film.—*gh*

The King's Speech (R) tells the story of the man who became King George VI, the father of Queen Elizabeth II. After his brother abdicates, George ("Bertie") reluctantly assumes the throne. Plagued by a dreaded stammer and considered unfit to be king, Bertie engages the help of an unorthodox speech therapist named Lionel Logue, who helps him find his voice and boldly lead the country through war. This is another film marked by an excellent cast. —*gh*

Class conflict at the movies

Films often serve as a mirror of the trends in our culture. As art, they also uncover certain realities we may otherwise ignore.

Among the films from last year on my top 10 list (see box at left) are several that deal with aspects of what could be called class conflict.

Perhaps most obvious is *Inside Job*, my No. 1 film, a documentary that looks at the factors affecting the economic crisis of 2008. Though not the best-made film of the year, it may be the most important, because it uncovers in detail the unjust, immoral if not criminal ways the financial industry took billions of dollars from people for its own interests. This global financial meltdown, which cost over $20 trillion and led to millions of people losing their homes and jobs, is still affecting us. And not much is changing, as the wealthy class continues to reap rewards at the expense of the middle class and the poor.

The Social Network, one of the year's best-made films, also deals with a topic with wide implications for our social life: the beginnings of Facebook. It's structured as a kind of class conflict between Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who was hardly poor, and the wealthy twins Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss. Now Zuckerberg is among the wealthiest people around, ruling over the class-less Facebook empire.

Winter's Bone takes us into a world that is foreign to most of us, as a 17-year-old girl in a poor rural area tries to keep her family together while searching for her lost father. Here the conflict is between what we see in this film and the kind of world we regularly see on TV or in films.

Let me skip to my No. 7, *The Fighter*, which tells the story of Micky Ward, who won the world light welterweight boxing title in 2001. He comes from a large Catholic family in a poor neighborhood in Lowell, Mass., a blue-collar town that catches boxing fever as it follows the fortunes of Micky and his brother, Dicky, a former fighter who has become a crack addict. While the film deals mostly with family dynamics, we again are brought into a world of violence and drug abuse, a world in conflict with our usual experience.

Waiting for "Superman," another documentary, looks at our failing education system in this country. While many of the "drop-out factories" it names are in poor neighborhoods, the film shows how ineffective education spans class, affecting many of us.

Other films not in my top 10 reflect this attention to class. One is *The King's Speech*, which tells of the struggle of the man who became King George VI to overcome his stammer. While many British films deal with class conflict, this one creates empathy for "Bertie" as he reveals to his speech therapist how he was treated by his father and nanny when he was a child. We are reminded that suffering affects all classes.

We in this country have tended to pretend we are basically classless, that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed. But the recent economic crisis and the growing (for decades) gap between rich and poor (see Miscellany, January) have tarnished that pretense. Great Britain, on the other hand, acknowledges its class divisions in almost every film made there.

One of the values of film (and other media) is that it can take us into worlds where we normally would not or do not have the means to go. These films introduce us to settings and characters that both reflect and challenge our experiences.

Gordon Houser, associate editor of The Mennonite

These readers submitted answers

Amanda Bartel, Wichita, Kan.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Karen Fretz, Lancaster, Pa.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Stephen M. Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Patricia Martin, Lancaster, Pa.
Brenda Miller, Orrville, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Jerry Newcomer, Seville, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Janet Sabo, Elyria, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Lillian Stoltzfus, Morgantown, Pa.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Elmer Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.

Column missing

The grid we published for the December 2010 crossword puzzle was missing one column on the right. Most readers simply drew in the missing column to complete the puzzle.

If you would like a corrected grid, we will mail you a new page or e-mail the page as a PDF. Call 800-790-2498 with your request.

We apologize for this mistake.—*Editor*

RESOURCES

Take our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book Advent Through Pentecost (Volume 2) (Herald Press, 2010, $34.99) covers the seasons fo the Christian year (Advent through Pentecost). Its distinctive Anabaptist flavor is evident in the predominance of Jesus' voice, space for communal reflection on Scripture and the choices of Bible readings.

Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination and History by Dale C. Allison Jr. (BakerAcademic, 2010, $54.99) contends that the standard criteria most scholars have employed and continue to employ for constructing the historical Jesus are of little value. Instead, Allison offers a groundbreaking alternative that takes advantage of what cognitive science has learned about human memory.

The Republic of Grace: Augustinian Thoughts for Dark Times by Charles Mathewes (Eerdmans, 2010, $20) addresses the nature of terrorism, the challenges of American geopolitics, the promise and perils of globalization and develops a constructive framework for Christian engagement with our world.

Stories of Service (MWC, 2010, $20) is a new DVD from Mennonite World Conference that provides seven minidocumentaries about compassionate ministries of local churches belonging to MWC member bodies. Funded by Mennonite Central Committee and available in English, French and Spanish, it is intended for a wide range of educational and worship settings in congregations and small groups.

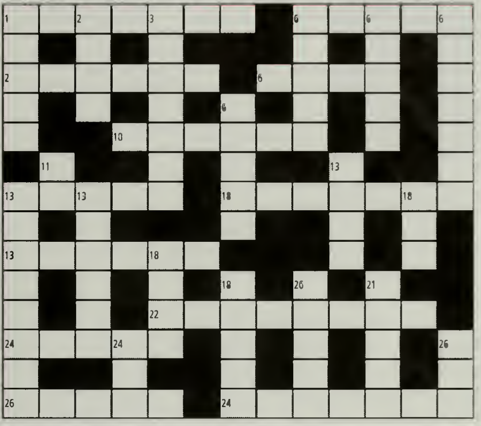
Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites by Donald Kraybill (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, $35) includes 340 amply referenced entries, bibliography and directory of groups that will help scholars, students, historians, church leaders and others trace the ties that bind these Anabaptist communities.

Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries by Tobin Miller Shearer (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, $65) shows how the civil rights movement played out in Mennonite homes and churches from the 1940s through the 1960s.

Christians and War by James A. Reimer (Fortress Press, 2010, $6) traces the church's attitude to war through the centuries, beginning with a look at biblical passages on war and moving through Just War thinking, the Crusades, the Reformation and on to nuclear pacifism and the war on terror. Based on courses Reimer taught, the small book is suitable for group study.

The teachings of Jude

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS
1. An angel mentioned in Jude
4. He did not keep his position of authority and abandoned his home for darkness.
7. "Pray in the Holy ____."
8. The prophet Enoch was "seventh from ____."
10. Jude mentions this Old Testament man who was disobedient (but was corrected by his donkey. Num. 22).
13. Jude is written to those loved by God and kept by ____. (one word).
15. "Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to ____ life." v. 21.
17. Scoffers will follow their own desires and "are the men who ___ you …" v. 18-19.
22. Jude said to "remember what the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold." v. 17.
23. "… they have rushed for profit into Balaam's ____ ." v. 11.
26. "Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding ___ gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion." v. 7.
27. "These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand … these are the very things that ____ them." v. 10.

DOWN
1. His body was in dispute between an archangel and the devil.
2. This murderer is used as an example by Jude.
3. Jude warns of men who only understand by instinct, "like unreasoning ____." v. 10.
4. A town destroyed for sexual immorality and perversion.
5. "In the last ___there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." v. 18.
6. Those who do not have the Spirit, "follow mere ___ instincts." v. 19.
9. A brother to Jude.
11. "Mercy, peace and love __ yours in abundance." v. 2.
12. A high-ranking, ___ -angel
13. The angels who left their own home are kept in darkness until the day of ____ .
14. "… to the only God our ____ be glory, majesty, power and authority …" v. 25.
16. "For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ___ have secretly slipped in among you." v. 4.
18. Jude addressed his readers as "____ friends" many times.
19. The angels who left were "____ with everlasting chains …" v. 6.
20. The ungodly men are compared to "wandering ____ for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever." v. 13.
21. Jude warned about false teachers just as this apostle did in his second letter.
24. "… they follow their ___ evil desires." v. 16.
25. "… for judgment on the great ___." v. 6.

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our April 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

March 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLE MAY BE FOUND ON PAGE 57

(Continued from page 5)

to time taken on specific problems of obvious injustice, why not name and take on the entire problem at its root, once and for all? No one else is doing that."

Zani needs to also take into account the history of the Friends (Quakers) and Church of the Brethren as the three historic peace churches, which have always worked in many ways to address the issues of war, violence and social injustice. Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren have been consistent in trying to address the roots of the issues of war, violence and social injustice, not merely to work at them in a piecemeal manner, as Zani has indicated. These three peace churches have consistently sought to "learn the things that make for peace," as Jesus desired.—*Conrad Wetzel, Champaign, Ill.*

Unhappy about silence

The Northern District of Virginia Mennonite Conference had a conference on sexuality on Nov. 20, 2010. The group present acknowledged that our denomination calls for costly discipleship from those who continue with a same-sex orientation: a commitment to lifelong celibacy. Our leaders identified themselves with this stance.

For the last 10 years our denomination has remained silent on this issue ("Why talk about it? Our position is clear."). Our denomination remains silent except for reiterating statements from the 1980s. Thus, many, particularly our younger leaders, have not had the church help them examine the culture's voices on this matter.

We need to talk together, engage in the "ongoing dialogue and discernment" affirmed by the delegates at our Columbus 2009 Assembly. If the only voice we are hearing is the world's voice, how can there be hope of gospel faithfulness?—*Harold N. Miller, Broadway, Va.*

Editor's note: *Since 2000, we have observed a moratorium on letters and articles that address Mennonite Church USA's teaching position on homosexuality. We do publish letters, however, that comment on our decision to maintain this moratorium.*

Serious misconceptions

Regarding "Missions as a Form of Exoticism," November 2010): Leo Hartshorn's "cursory reading" about global missions has left him with some serious misconceptions, and I hope as he interacts with members of the Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) staff he will become better educated about both the past and the present situation.

From the beginning of the foreign mission endeavor of the Mennonite church, the goal has always been to produce independent churches. That goal has been attained in all except the most recently started work. The Mennonite churches in Taiwan, Colombia and Congo have no long-term missionary presence. The involvement of MMN, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in all countries is to support the local church in its program, whether by sending missionaries, money or some kind of expertise.

In some countries, MMN supports indigenous missionaries appointed and sent out by the local church. MMN also works with the Indonesian Mennonites to support workers in other countries. In southern Africa, there has been no attempt to begin a Mennonite church. But Mennonites have worked with other, mostly African-initiated churches. AIMM is a purely coordinating agency. One of its purposes is to promote fellowship between the churches in Africa and those in the United States and Canada.

The apostle Paul gave the best analogy of the Christian church: that of the human body. No part is dispensable, no part is more important except the head, which is Jesus Christ. A body is healthy when all parts work together, each performing its function.—*Elvina Martens, Goshen, Ind.*

More with less

I just finished rereading Doris Longacre's 30-year-old book, *Living More With Less*. I must confess I need to sharpen my mind and habits about living more with less. Thank you, Valerie Weaver-Zercher, for "Humility, Humus and Humor" (December 2010). I affirm her idea of editing an update on the subject. In today's economy, the Baby Boomers and Generation X can get many helpful tips in areas such as money, travel, clothing, housing, celebrations and recreation.

I'm appalled at all the big plastic bags of Styrofoam that are thrown away every week at my church.—*Pauline Wyse, Wayland, Iowa*

Beyond Islamophobia

Thank you for "How to Get Beyond Islamophobia" (December 2010). Let me recommend the book *A Dangerous Misunderstanding* by Mark Siljander (former Congressman from Michigan and deputy ambassador to the United Nations). The book claims that if a few words in the Old and New Testaments were translated from Hebrew or Aramaic with their alternate meanings, Christians and Muslims would find they have much more in common and little reason to be enemies because of religious differences. It debunks the ideas that the Qur'an justifies terrorism or calls for killing of Christians as infidels.

I was disappointed when I Googled Mark Siljander and discovered that he was convicted of obstruction of justice related to his having lied about receiving money to attempt to influence the removal of an Islamic charity from the list of charities believed to be supporting terrorism. I don't think that negates what he has to say in his book, but it certainly will cause many people not to give adequate consideration to what he wrote. Still, I believe you will find the book an enlightening and interesting read.—*Jonathan D. Wieand, Goshen, Ind.*

Investing in hope Seeds of hope

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.—1 Corinthians 3:6 (TNIV)

When farmers plow and thresh, they should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.
—1 Corinthians 9:10 (TNIV)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about investing in hope. That is, he compared his apostolic work with farmers who plow, sow and thresh in the hope of sharing a harvest.

Like farmers dependent on soil and weather conditions beyond their control, Paul sowed with the hope of a harvest. He planted spiritual seed in the life of the Corinthian people, nurturing the hope that God would bring forth fruit among them. What a beautiful word picture for the way we invest ourselves in the lives of other people, hoping that God will bring about something good!

What kinds of seeds did Paul plant among the people at Corinth? What kind of harvest did Paul expect? I imagine Paul may have been thinking of the parable of the sower, where Jesus compared seed to the Word of God (Matthew 13:3-23). Surely Paul saw the good news of Jesus Christ as fertile seed that would bear fruit in the lives of his hearers, many of whom were pagans. He expected this seed to yield a harvest produced by God. The yield is the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul explained it to the Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience and so on (Galatians 5:22).

The parable of the sower demonstrates that God calls each of us to receive the seed of the Word. Our heart is the seedbed in which God's word can sprout, grow and bring forth abundant fruit. At times we harden our hearts. Yet it is also true that God calls us to plant seeds in the lives of other people.

This concept is perhaps captured most eloquently in a prayer by Saint Francis of Assisi. Both of the most recent Mennonite hymnals include it among the prayers for public worship:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi was aware that we are called to plant seeds in all kinds of soil. Christian ministry seeks to reclaim weed-infested soil for a harvest of right living.

Like farmers who trust God for a crop, we cannot determine the outcome of our labor. Yet we do not "bury" seeds with lament that we will never see them again. Rather, we plant seeds of God's peace with the confidence that we are in partnership with God. We invest in the hope that God puts life into the seed. Our hope is in God, who created all things and makes the earth bear fruit.

We plant seeds of God's peace with the confidence that we are in partnership with God.

Over the next year, I intend to explore the theme of hope in the Scriptures, finding application for us today. Recently I've noticed a number of references in church papers that speak of hope. For example, Mennonite World Conference's last issue of *Courier* in 2010 carried interviews with members of their Executive Committee, leaders from around the world. Each was asked what gave him or her hope. Again, the summer 2010 issue of *Philhaven Perspective* was devoted to an exploration of ways mental health workers bring hope to their patients.

Together, let's explore God's call to bring healing and hope to the world. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA

************************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
126281 333 01-JAN-13 P-1 P49
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 746
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

Mennonites and alcohol

Everett J. Thomas

Catholics think the Communion wine turns into Christ's blood; Mennonites think the wine turns into grape juice.—Tony Campolo

Campolo's gentle gibe may have been relevant in the early 1990s. But imbibing wine and other alcoholic beverages is the latest form of assimilation for many Mennonites. Some see this as a loss of faithfulness; it need not be.

When I asked associate editor Anna Groff to write an article about a new winery opened by a Mennonite couple in Virginia, I expected reactions to it (see page 4). While former Mennonites have started breweries and wineries and now operate bars/restaurants in places like Archbold, Ohio, and Goshen, Ind., this story was about members of a Mennonite Church USA congregation and their intent to make wine for profit (January).

After we posted the article on our Facebook page, several FB friends demonstrated the humor and differences among us:

Craig Frere: "Oh my lands. … Next thing you know, Mennonites will be dancing and playing cards."

There are numerous issues that create divides among us. The legal and moderate use of alcohol need not be one of them.

Pegge Houpt Tennant: "Do Mennonites drink wine? I am a Mennonite and would not think of it, but am curious if some do."

Craig Frere: "Yes, some Mennonites do drink wine. In fact I know Mennonite pastors who make their own wine."

Jerry Stanaway: "If Jesus turned water into wine, drinking wine must be OK. Those who claim this was just unfermented wine (grape juice) are wrong."

Changing attitudes toward alcohol have been traced by several studies, including *The Mennonite Mosaic* and *Road Signs for the Journey*. In 1972, 50 percent of Mennonites and other Anabaptists said drinking alcohol (moderately) was "always wrong," and in 1989, that percentage was still at 43 percent. But by 2007, only 26 percent considered it "always wrong."

Those who continue to believe abstention is a mark of faithfulness hold to a venerable tradition. But each generation must discern expressions of faithfulness prompted by God's Spirit.

In my lifetime, I have watched numerous such expressions disappear for many of us. I recall when my father stopped wearing his plain coat and mother stopped wearing cape dresses and prayer coverings. But some of my elderly relatives still wear these marks of faithfulness; I respect them for it.

When I was 13, our family left a theologically conservative congregation and began attending a more progressive Mennonite church in another conference. I was scandalized by the women with short hair, makeup and jewelry. It created something of a spiritual crisis for me; I was no longer sure of my salvation.

That may seem humorous. But it was not funny to me as an adolescent. I understand those for whom today's changes in our "marks of faithfulness" are traumatic.

Why, then, did I decide to publish the article about the Mennonite winery in Virginia?

Our Anabaptist tradition is nearly 475 years old. During the last 100 years, the church considered the consumption of alcohol to be a sin. But that "marker" is passing away. While a large majority of us—probably 75 percent by now—accepts some use, we honor those for whom the consumption of alcohol continues to be "always wrong." There are numerous issues that create divides among us. The legal and moderate use of alcohol need not be one of them.—*ejt*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURC

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02003376 8

The Mennonite

Organizer extraordinaire for God

March 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- A special section on preparing for Pittsburgh 2011
- Special needs, special abilities
- An exemplary discernment process
- Editing history to make it nicer
- Editorial: Help for Sudan's Christians

Everence

Photo: Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind. by John Tirotta

Let's grow together

Welcome to the new Everence – the result of MMA and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union growing together to offer you complete financial services rooted in faith and values.

How we help

- Banking services
- Investments and retirement plans
- Charitable giving, trusts and estate planning
- Employee benefits
- Health, life, disability and long-term care insurance
- Credit and debt counseling

Talk to your local representative or visit Everence.com to learn more.

Scan the tag with your mobile phone to watch our story and see how we're helping people like you.

A ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches

Everence offers banking products that are federally insured. We also offer securities and other products that are not NCUA insured, may involve loss of principal, and have no credit union guarantee. Not all products are available in all states.

Get the free mobile app for your phone
http://gettag.mobi

2110135

TheMennonite March 2011 | Volume 14, Number 3

FEB 28 2011

CONTENTS

12 **Organizer extraordinaire for God**
—Sharon K. Williams

18 **Ambassadors of reconciliation**
—Ched Myers and Elaine Enns

21 **A special section on Pittsburgh 2011**

31 **The bus ride**
—Roy A. Borges

32 **Special needs, special abilities**
—Erin R. DuBois

39 **Convention 2011 goes green**—Anna Groff

40 **The Corinthian Plan's first year is a success**
—Anna Groff

42 **Young leaders launch new network**—Anna Groff

43 **German young adults serve in the United States**—Melanie Hess

44 **Pastors' weeks focus on Holy Spirit, preaching**—Laura Lehman Amstutz and Mary E. Klassen

45 **Conversation Room needs healthy dialogue**
—Anna Groff

46 **Institutions are returning to the church**
—Edgar Stoesz

48 **Excel Industries gives $500,000 to Hesston College**—Marathana Prothro

51 **Carolyn Heggen new Sister Care co-facilitator**—Heidi Martin

52 **MCC suspends work in Egypt**

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART
IN

ON THE COVER: Photo by Dale D. Gehman

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
36 Leadership
37 Real Families
38 Opinion
39 News
53 For the Record
56 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
March 2011 | Volume 14, Number 3

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

722 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016
fax: 574-535-6050

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Thanks for Sharon's faithfulness

Thanks to Joanna Shenk for the article affirming the calling and ministry of Sharon Kennel ("On a Different Track," February). I am one who has benefited immensely from Sharon's gifts of ministry. Her gentle strength and servant heart have provided encouragement and support in navigating the many aspects of congregational ministry. Through celebration and lament, she has given unselfishly of her time, energy and wise counsel as she has shared her love for Christ and the church.

Our journey of life is shaped by many decisions and relationships. I am grateful for Sharon's willingness to answer God's call to ministry, for her husband Cecil's support and for those who recognized her gifts and nudged her forward.

These responses to God's activity have shaped my life and the lives of others and continue to bear fruit. I hope this story will encourage people to take the next step in the adventure of ministry.*—Lewis Miller, Beemer, Neb.*

It's Calvinism, not Anabaptism

When Lisa Schirch asks how Mennonites can "better redeem the powers of state and military," her question sounds more at home in the Calvinist tradition than that of Anabaptism ("Confessions of a Modern-Day Pacifist," February). John Calvin believed the church and state worked in a complementary way to enforce God's law on the world, and he wrote to refute the Schleitheim Confession's rejection of the magistrate as "outside the perfection of Christ."

Like Schirch, Calvin also believed pacifism was in need of "some serious updating." Yet this Christian practice, in danger of becoming "a quaint if naïve relic of the past," survived Calvin's wrath. It has, in fact, survived five centuries of challenges just like these.
—Melissa Florer-Bixler, Princeton, N.J.

Wrong name

Thank you for publishing the article commemorating the 100th anniversary of Dhamtari Christian Hospital in India ("Indian Hospital Turns 100," February). This is a place that is close to my heart. My mother, Clara Esch Headrick, was born in this hospital, the daughter of Mennonite missionaries, Christian David (C.D.) and Mina Esch. The name of my grandfather was listed wrongly in the article.

It is a wonderful thing to see the hard work of my grandparents—and many others—be so fruitful. Thanks be to God.*—Betsy Headrick McCrae, Lakewood, Colo.*

Thank you, Martha

Editor's note: In January, we mailed a letter to the 18 people who subscribed to The Mennonite *on cassette and invited letters of appreciation for Martha Graber, who read each issue on tape for more than 20 years as a volunteer. See "A Long Life of Witness and Service" (February).*

I am writing on behalf of Clayton Sutter, who has been enjoying the fruits of Martha's labor for a number of years as a result of his macular degeneration and loss of ability to read. This comes in reply to your invitation for readers to send notes of appreciation. Here is Clayton's:

Many of us visually impaired people have appreciated Martha's reading *The Mennonite* all these years. We sincerely thank you and know that when the books of life are opened, you'll hear the Holy One say, "Martha, you stand here at my right side. I heard you reading *The Mennonite* to many of my children. You really did it to me. So I thank you. Enter into your reward."—*Kathy Holsopple, New Paris, Ind.*

Let us not further divide ourselves

Regarding Mennonite Church USA's decision to hold Convention 2013 in Phoenix (February): I have listened to many of the concerns raised over these months of discernment and have observed that the Executive Board members were listening. We have had many months of opportunity to voice our opinions. Now that the decision has been made, I choose to believe that God's Spirit has been at work in the decision-making process. Let us not further divide ourselves over this but agree to disagree in love and seek to discover where God will lead next.

While I dearly love people who disagree on this issue, I am saddened by the labeling and name-calling and threats around this issue that sound a bit like our national rhetoric. Let us, who trace our theological roots to the Radical Reformation, continue to be radical in the way we love and respect each other, and let us be united in our endeavor to follow Jesus.—*Rachel Hartzler, Goshen, Ind.*

Some history should be grieved

Annie Wenger-Nabigon's call for Mennonites to return land to Native Americans (Letters, January) has a powerful impact because I once lived in a state where half the area would be returned to them if the treaties made were actually honored by the U.S. government. The writer recognizes that "we are all complicit because we all benefit from the results of that genocide" in the 1800s. Migrating Mennonites were eager to find a place to live, while the Santa Fe Railroad was eager to sell land. This transaction was brutal to the earlier immigrants who did not perceive this to be a "fascinating public-private partnership." Rachel Pannabecker rightly states (*The Newton Kansan*, Jan. 3): "Some parts of Kansas history should be grieved, not celebrated."—*Donald D. Kaufman, Newton, Kan.*

Changed by experience

"Prestigious Gathering Features Mennonite Scholars" (January) got our attention because when we lived in Telford, Pa., we participated in the Fresh Air program for urban children. For 17 years, we enjoyed the children of an African-American family, the Cooks. There were four children, their births spaced so that when the oldest became ineligible, the next-in-age child would come. Our association with the Cooks has become a lifelong experience that included their parents. We are now 90 and 85, and this past year the mother and three of the daughters visited us in a retirement community here, driving from New York City. We were again privileged to mutually enjoy each other's presence.

This experience brought changes to our lives and to theirs, too. Since we had nine children of our own, all of them benefited, including the churches they now attend in their adult lives, because of an actual experience with a family of another race.—*Mark and Betty Moyer, Davidsville, Pa.*

Mennonites and alcohol

Editor's note: The remaining letters in this issue respond to the January article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia." Letters are published here in the order they were received. Due to space limitations, we can print only excerpts from longer letters. Letters in response to the February editorial will be published in the April issue.

About the news article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January): The Hartmans should have had a note about their stance about people who are alcoholics or are

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

On Aug. 31, 2010, we received an email from Sharon Williams saying, "Thought you might be interested in this. Adamino and Ruth Ortiz are being honored at a Phillies pregame show on Friday night." It piqued our interest; after learning more about Adamino's remarkable life, we commissioned Williams to write the cover story for this issue (page 12).

This is also our preconvention issue. The special section beginning on page 21 provides information about Mennonite Church USA's Pittsburgh 2011 convention to be held July 4-9. In addition to this section, associate editor Anna Groff wrote about two other convention matters: the plan to make Pittsburgh 2011 as environmentally green as possible (page 39) and the Executive Board's efforts to generate interest in a new convention feature (page 45).

Groff also wrote news stories about the success of The Corinthian Plan in its first year (page 40) and the launch of a leadership network by Mennonite young adults (page 42).

Because March is Disabilities Awareness Month, we also publish an article commissioned by MHS Alliance entitled "Special Needs, Special Abilities" (page 32).

In Opinion (page 38), Rick Stiffney offers a review of the Executive Board's decision-making process when deciding to hold Convention 2013 in Phoenix.—*Editor*

Muriel Thiessen Stackley, former editor, dies at 73

NEWTON, Kan.—Muriel Thiessen Stackley, 73, who served in roles of editor, writer and pastor, died of cancer Jan. 29 in Lincoln, Neb.

Stackley served from 1986 to 1992 as editor of *The Mennonite* when it was the periodical of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC). In 1998, it merged with *Gospel Herald* to become the publication of Mennonite Church USA.

Before that, she worked in the GCMC office in Newton for 18 years, writing and editing news, curriculum and materials for youth.

Born March 2, 1937, in Champa, India, to missionaries John and Elizabeth (Wiens) Thiessen, she graduated from Bluffton (Ohio) College (now University), the University of Kansas and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

She married Theodore Stackley on June 21, 1964. He died April 5, 1985. They served with Church World Service in Botswana in the early 1970s.

Stackley was pastor of Bergthal Mennonite Church in Pawnee Rock, Kan., from 1996 to 2002. She also served with Mennonite Voluntary Service in 2003 and became a reservist with Christian Peacemaker Teams in 2009.

Stackley wrote two volumes of poetry, *Oracle of the Heart* (1998) and *War Is a God That Demands Human Sacrifice* (2009) and coauthored (with Edgar Stoesz) *Garden in the Wilderness* (1999), a book about the Mennonite colonies in Paraguay.—*Gordon Houser*

MCC U.S. resumes antiracism process

AKRON, Pa.—The Anti-Racism Program (ARP) of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. is resuming its Damascus Road Anti-racism Process, a set of trainings that focuses on dismantling racism within churches and other Christian communities in the United States. The trainings have been on a sabbatical since March 1, 2010.

During a September 2010 meeting, ARP staff and trainers determined that it would be beneficial for Damascus Road, which is one component of the ARP, to form the foundation of an independent organization.

On Nov. 6, 2010, the MCC U.S. Board directed staff to prepare a transition plan for their review. Details for the transition to an independent organization are under discussion.—*MCC*

Rempel named MWC director of finance

KITCHENER, Ontario—Len Rempel has been appointed director of finance and administration for Mennonite World Conference, replacing Karen Martin Schiedel, effective March 14. He will work out of MWC's North American office in Kitchener. Martin Scheidel has accepted a post as business manager at Kitchener's Rockway Mennonite Collegiate but will continue essential tasks at MWC until Rempel begins.—*MWC*

Scott Sundberg

Five for five

On Jan. 24, Marva Mimms Porter (center) and Robby Bethal (right) attend a dedication of five houses in New Iberia, La., being built by five Hartville, Ohio, Mennonite churches (Bethany, Cornerstone, Hartville, Maple Grove and Pleasant View) through Mennonite Disaster Service. Bethal's mother is on the left. See full story on page 50.—*MDS*

MCC representatives agree to a new structure

AKRON, Pa.—At a summit Jan. 31-Feb. 1, Mennonite Central Committee reached structural agreements that will affect its ministry in the coming years. Nine of the 13 denominations that support the Canada, U.S. and binational MCCs, along with the 12 MCC agencies in Canada and the United States and Mennonite World Conference, sent a total of 62 representatives.

The agreements—on agency roles, program administration and accountability to the church—will be written into bylaws and covenants expected to be endorsed in 2011, along with recommendations for a streamlined structure that will be implemented in 2012.

The work of MCC around the world will be collaboratively led by both MCC Canada and MCC U.S. They take over the role from the current binational MCC, which will end as an organization. The anticipated timing of this transition is early 2012.—*MCC*

Police arrest 10 in protest of Guantánamo detention

CHICAGO—On Jan. 11, police arrested 10 people dressed in orange jumpsuits and black hoods outside the Federal courts in Chicago when the group tried to enter the building in a symbolic search for justice on behalf of the Guantánamo detainees and other victims of state-sponsored torture. Christian Peacemaker Teams training participants helped organize the witness.

Jan. 11 marked the beginning of Guantánamo's 10th year of operation. The U.S. government continues to detain 173 men in the prison indefinitely without charge or due process despite President Obama's executive order to close the facility two years ago. Thirteen of those men have already been cleared for release, but remain in custody.—*CPT*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

Chad Weaver, *The Goshen News*

Police remove World War I ordnance in Goshen

An Elkhart (Ind.) police officer uses a remote control to lift a box with unexploded ordnance into the bomb squad's trailer on Feb. 9. Staff members of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives in Goshen, Ind., found two large caliber shells, a hand grenade and a small aerial bomb in a box marked "World War I Memorabilia." The police report said the ordnance was inert.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Denominations invite MWC to Farm Show Building in Harrisburg

WHITERIVER, Ariz.—On Feb. 2, leaders from U.S. denominations that are members of Mennonite World Conference met to create a joint invitation to the MWC executive committee to hold Assembly 2015 in Harrisburg, Pa.

Richard Thomas, moderator-elect, and Ervin Stutzman, executive director, represented Mennonite Church USA at the meeting. The other denominations were Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ and Conservative Mennonite Conference.

The denominations propose the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg, which has undergone renovations.

"After touring the building, the group thought that it would have an appropriate feel that would be welcoming for an MWC Assembly, has enough space, and is adequate while at the same time does not feel too up-scale," said Thomas in an e-mail on Feb. 5.

If the invitation is accepted by MWC, the inviting denominations and MWC will appoint a planning committee.—*Anna Groff*

MEA gets grant to send Roth book to churches

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) and Mennonite Schools Council received a grant of $5,650 from the Fund for Peoplehood Education for churchwide distribution of the book *Teaching that Transforms: Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters* by John D. Roth (Herald Press), who teaches history at Goshen College.

MEA will send copies of the book to Mennonite Church USA congregations and denominational leaders.

Roth says: "We are an aging denomination. Membership is declining, as is denominational loyalty. Sunday school attendance is falling. And enrollment at Mennonite schools, colleges and seminaries is not where it could be." In response, Roth offers an invitation to an honest conversation about the future of the Anabaptist-Mennonite witness in North America.—*MEA*

Name that building

WHITERIVER, Ariz.—The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (EB) wants to name the new Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart, Ind. One possibility is the Michael and Margareta Sattler Center.

Seniors for Peace in Goshen, Ind., proposed the name (or Sattler Center for short) to Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA executive director in October 2010.

At the Jan. 7-9 EB meeting in Tampa, Fla., EB decided to consider the Sattler Center name as one option but hopes to solicit more names from church members of all ages. EB staff will develop the process to solicit suggestions for the name and bring it back to EB for approval.

EB members also adopted a policy for naming buildings for Mennonite Church USA offices.—*Anna Groff*

Everence calls for BP accountability

GOSHEN, Ind.—Continuing engagement efforts begun soon after last year's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Everence Financial and other investors from the United States, United Kingdom and around the world are working together to hold BP accountable.

The formation of this coalition, led by Everence/MMA Praxis Mutual Funds and Christian Brothers Investment Services in the United States, will strengthen the voice of concerned investors with the company, according to Mark Regier, Everence Financial director of stewardship investing. The agreement includes the withdrawal of a 2011 shareholder resolution led by U.S. investors, which gives BP additional time to systematically address operational risks and investor concerns.
—*Everence*

Make the leap

Ron Adams
is a pastor at
East Chestnut Street
Mennonite Church
in Lancaster, Pa.

We have a cat named Kirby. I've written about him before—and of my penchant for assuming that a fat old cat exhibits human feelings and longings. Well, I've been doing it again.

I watched Kirby do some jumping recently. Nothing acrobatic about it. From the floor to his chair. Not a big jump. What I noticed was the "measure twice-cut once" approach Kirby takes to jumping. He looks up to where he intends to land. Then looks at the floor. Then back to the chair, and then to the floor. Then, having taken precise measurements to ensure a proper and dignified landing, Kirby jumps. And nails it every time.

I'm sure such behavior is hard-wired into Kirby's smallish brain, and that he is not really calculating height and energy and mass and velocity. He just follows some ancient genetic behavioral pattern and jumps.

But I can't help imagining that what Kirby is up to is careful measurement of the risk and the gain, weighing the chance of falling over against the possibility of landing somewhere warm and soft that feels like home. Because, truth be told, that's how I usually get ready to make a leap.

Look before you leap. That's the common wisdom. Don't be precipitous. Don't be impulsive. Don't take unnecessary risks. Look before you leap.

> In the Lenten season, we see Jesus calling his disciples to jump farther and higher and over wider chasms than they'd ever jumped before.

Then there's this opposite bit of wisdom: She who hesitates is lost. It's like when the boat is casting off, and she's running down the pier but hesitates at the edge, and the boat is gone. If she'd gone ahead and thrown caution to the wind and made the leap, she would have made it safe onboard.

I live somewhere between the two. Wanting to be wise as the serpent, cool and calculating, moving slowly and carefully toward my target. But also wanting to be as innocent as a dove, ready to risk it all, flying off half-cocked and trusting that something good will come of it. Wishing I could know in advance exactly what will come if I jump. And wishing I could stop fretting and just leap into the unknown.

Like a good Mennonite should, I tilt toward the cautious. Despite my desire to be more carefree, less careful, I rarely take a big risk. To be honest, the little ambiguities left after all my "discernment" (which is often a euphemism for agonizing over the decision in hopes that it will make itself) are usually more than enough for me to handle.

Yet I am aware, mostly after the fact, that I can miss out on much by moving too slowly, measuring too carefully and calculating too finely. And I wonder if it's not time for me to learn sometimes how to close my eyes and leap and trust that I'll land where I ought to land.

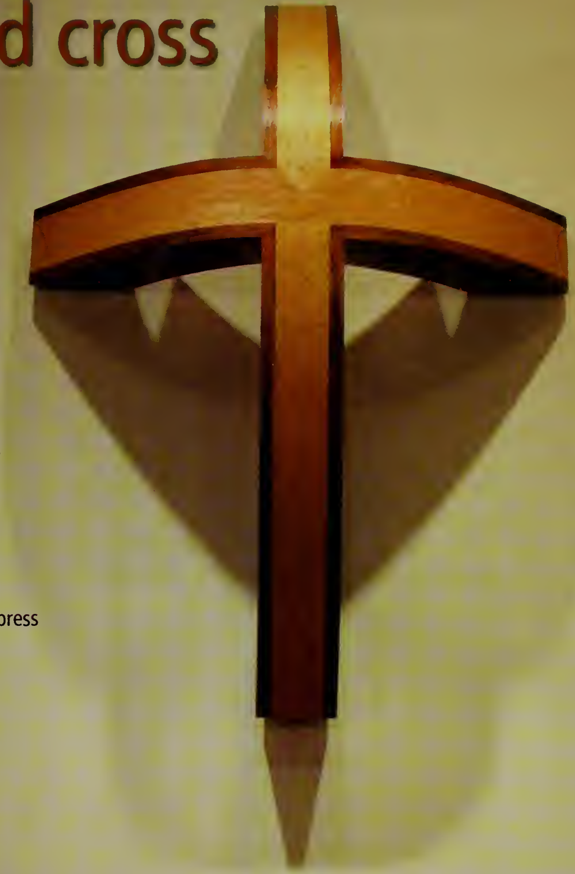
In the Lenten season, we see Jesus calling his disciples to jump farther and higher and over wider chasms than they'd ever jumped before, to place their hope in someone who keeps telling them he's on his way to Jerusalem to suffer and die, to trust that he will be raised from the dead. Jesus also calls them to count the cost. But it is clear that he is using a higher form of math than they know. Because, following their counting, it would be best to turn around and walk away and find some other, less alarming savior. But using Jesus' calculations, following him all the way to death and beyond is the only wise choice.

I know their fear. We all do. The fear of placing our lives in the hands of someone telling us things that, coming from anyone else, would be dismissed without a thought. When we do the calculations the usual way, we despair of making the leap. It's too scary.

But Jesus keeps on calling us to do it. To count the cost his way, which means seeing all of eternity at the end of equation and trusting that we'll land there if we just cross our hearts and close our eyes and make the leap. To follow him to Golgotha, to the tomb and on toward that place that feels like home.

That is home. TM

The curved cross



I
It looks like a stick man
or Gumby doing push-ups
on the wall.

II
It has the warm comfort
of caramel candy,
the shadow
of outstretched arms.

III
It's a Mennonite icon,
the shape of increased agony,
the Christmas tree of holy folly,
the empty tree.

IV
It has all eyes on it—
with wood of Birds-eye Maple.

What message does the Spirit press
through that veneer?

V
Behind the cross of Jesus
is a kaleidoscope of colors,
of cast away cans.

There's an illusion
of heaviness
but it's actually light.

VI
The community sees it
differently
from every angle. I see
the keel and rib
of a ship. Or an anchor.

VII
The shadow of angel wings
going up
could be a delta-winged plane
diving down to earth.

"You down there,
pay attention."

This collaborative poem (with photograph) is by "The Grandparents" small group at First Mennonite Church of Indianapolis. The artwork is by Derrick Method.

First comes fear, which can lead to killing

In the wake of the terrible shooting in Tucson, Ariz., on Jan. 8, many pundits weighed in on the relationship between "violent" rhetoric and violent acts. Our own online poll in January asked whether inflammatory language in political discourse can lead to violent acts and should be monitored. A majority said yes.

After some initial vitriol from both the "left" and "right," most concluded that Jared Loughner's act was wrong and not necessarily caused by political rhetoric that pictured Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in the crosshairs of a (metaphorical) gun.

Robert Wright, in his Jan. 11 column in the *New York Times*, makes a point worth pondering in regard to this incident. While Sarah Palin's picture of a gunsight's crosshairs on Rep. Giffords may not have led Loughner to shoot her, rhetoric about conspiracies by the government may have.

Wright writes: "Six months ago, police in California pulled over a truck that turned out to contain a rifle, a handgun, a shotgun and body armor. Police learned from the driver—sometime after he opened fire on them—that he was heading for San Francisco, where he planned to kill people at the Tides Foundation. You've probably never heard of the Tides Foundation—unless you watch Glenn Beck, who had mentioned it more than two dozen times in the preceding six months, depicting it as part of a communist plot to "infiltrate" our society and seize control of big business."

Loughner also thought there was a conspiracy—a conspiracy by the government to control our thoughts (via grammar, in his bizarre worldview)—though it's not clear where he got his theory.

The media, including the Internet, is full of voices propounding conspiracy theories, left and right, with no empirical evidence. And people seem to lap it up.

One handy thing about such theories is that it simplifies a complex world and it always places the blame on someone else, someone we don't like (or if we do, we'll change theories). It thus relieves us of responsibility to change our lives.

Wright says such theories are the greater problem: "Palin's much-discussed crosshairs map probably isn't as dangerous as her claim that 'socialists' are trying to create 'death panels.' If you convince enough people that an enemy of the American way is setting up a system that could kill them, the violent hatred will take care of itself."

Fear and isolation breeds such violence. And one of the main culprits, writes Wright, is technological: "It isn't just that people can now build a cocoon of cable channels and websites that insulates them from inconvenient facts. It's also that this cocoon insulates them from other Americans—including the groups of Americans who, inside the cocoon, are being depicted as evil aliens. It's easy to buy into the demonization of people you never communicate with and whose views you never see depicted by anyone other than their adversaries."

As Christians we worship a God of love and are taught that "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). If we are to love as Jesus loved, then we need to spend more time in the Bible and less in the blogosphere.—*Gordon Houser*

1%

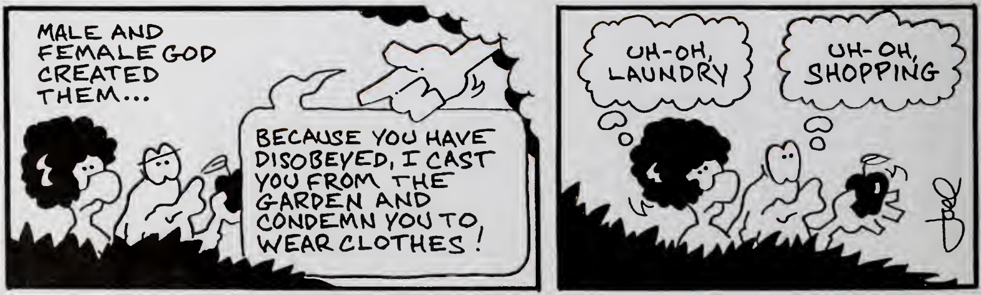
of the 31,224 gun deaths each year in the United States result from self-defense.—*Time*

8

children and teens die each day from gun violence.—*Time*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


MALE AND FEMALE GOD CREATED THEM...
BECAUSE YOU HAVE DISOBEYED, I CAST YOU FROM THE GARDEN AND CONDEMN YOU TO WEAR CLOTHES!
UH-OH, LAUNDRY
UH-OH, SHOPPING

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “In the modern world, famine is not an act of God; it is an act of war. … That civil populations account for as many as [90 percent of] deaths during modern wars is not merely an unfortunate accident.” —*Charles Kenny of the Center for Global Development*

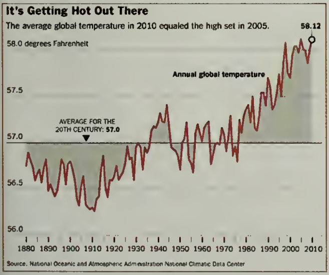
More young people in nursing homes

About one in seven people now living in nursing homes in the United States is under 65. But the growing phenomenon presents a host of challenges for nursing homes. The number of under-65 nursing home residents has risen about 22 percent in the past eight years to about 203,000, according to an analysis of statistics from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. That number has climbed as mental health facilities close and medical advances keep people alive after they’ve suffered traumatic injuries. Still, the overall percentage of nursing home residents 30 and younger is less than 1 percent.—*Associated Press*

2010 hottest and wettest year on record

New government figures for the global climate show that 2010 was the wettest year in the historical record, and it tied 2005 as the hottest year since record-keeping began in 1880.

The new figures confirm that 2010 will go down as one of the more remarkable years in the annals of climatology. It featured prodigious snowstorms that broke seasonal records in the United States and Europe; a record-shattering summer heat wave that scorched Russia; strong floods that drove people from their homes in places like Pakistan, Australia, California and Tennessee; a severe die-off of coral reefs; and a continuation in the global trend of a warming climate.



It’s Getting Hot Out There

The average global temperature in 2010 equaled the high set in 2005.

Source. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Climatic Data Center

Two agencies, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, reported Jan. 12 that the global average surface temperature for 2010 had tied the record set in 2005. The analyses differ slightly; in the NOAA version, the 2010 temperature was 1.12 degrees Fahrenheit above the average for the 20th century, which is 57 degrees.

It was the 34th year running that global temperatures have been above the 20th-century average; the last below-average year was 1976. The new figures show that 9 of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since the beginning of 2001.—*New York Times*

Mark your calendars

We Can Know, a Christian group based in Raleigh, N.C., believes Jesus will return on May 21.—*Associated Press*

Americans see religion’s role declining

Seven in 10 Americans say religion’s influence on the country is waning, and 61 percent say they belong to a church or synagogue, equaling the lowest number since Gallup began asking the question in the 1930s.—*Religion News Service*

Where your tax money goes

2009 tax receipt for a taxpayer earning $34,140, paying $5,400 in federal income tax and FICA (selected items)

Social Security	$1,040.70
Medicare	$625.51
Medicaid	$385.28
Interest on the national debt	$287.03
Combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan	$229.17
Military personnel	$192.79
Veteran’s benefits	$74.65
Federal highways	$63.89
Health care research (NIH)	$46.54
Foreign aid	$46.08
Education funding for low-income K-12 students	$38.17
Military retirement benefits	$32.60
Pell Grants for low-income college students	$29.75
NASA	$28.09
Internal Revenue Service	$17.69
Environmental cleanup (EPA)	$11.67
The FBI	$11.21
Head Start	$10.91
Public housing	$10.50
National parks	$4.27
Drug Enforcement Agency	$3.14
Amtrak	$2.23
Smithsonian Museum	$1.12
Funding for the arts	$0.24
Salaries and benefits for members of Congress	$0.19

—*Christian Century*

Adamino Ortiz has a heart for inviting people to know and follow God.

Organizer extraordinaire for God

by Sharon K. Williams

96
NORRISTOWN
NEW LIFE-NUEVA VID
MENNONITE CHURCH
HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPL
"CASA DE ORACION PARA TODOS
WORSHIP SERVICE 10 : 45 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30
SERVICTO BILINGU SER
MIE WED. 7:00PM
WELCOME BIENVEN

Adamino Ortiz in front of the meetingplace of Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church in Norristown, Pa., where he serves as a leader.

Photo by Dale D. Gehman

"The Bible preaches against retirement," Tony Campolo once said. He noted that Jesus even told a parable about a man who planned to retire on his accumulations and busied himself by building bigger barns to protect his property. "You fool!" (Luke 12:13-21)

Campolo maintains that elderly people (his words) are called to minister in the church—praying, prophesying, leading ministries for social change, visiting and loving people into the kingdom of God, modeling faithful marriages, good stewardship in finances and end-of-life decisions, making room for young people and new ways of worship, and then dying with dignity.

Few seniors live this better than Adamino Ortiz. Adamino serves as the executive director emeritus of ACLAMO Family Centers and as a leader in our congregation, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church (Norristown, Pa.). He also serves as coordinator for Franconia Mennonite Conference's Cuba ministry outreach.

The word "serve" is not an honorary designation when it comes to Adamino's involvement and commitment.

Adamino describes himself with dry humor and a twinkle in his eye as a Puerto Rican-Pennsylvania Dutch, Methodist-Mennonite. As a young person, Adamino was a youth leader and natural-born organizer in the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico and became president of the youth fellowship for the Methodist's North Region of the island. He brought young people together to do Christian dramas and other ministries. He has a heart for inviting people to know and follow God.

Adamino became a draftsman, working in San Juan. But he felt stuck in his career. In 1967, he followed his brother to Pottstown, Pa. He quickly learned English, and his organizer eye saw many needs among the Latino community, especially for translation services with the police and medical facilities. He organized a Hispanic hotline that operated three days a week from Pottstown Mennonite Church and three days a week from his home.

This led to an invitation to connect with community organizers in Norristown. Adamino led a grassroots group in developing a vision for a social service agency that would serve Latinos throughout Montgomery County. He became the founding executive director of Accíon Comunal Latino Americano de Montgomery County (ACLAMO), a position he held for 27 years. Today, ACLAMO Family Centers provide improved access to economic, educational, health, social and cultural opportunities to low-income individuals and families, especially those of Spanish-speaking heritage. ACLAMO offers preschool and after-school programs, ESL classes for adults and referral services for housing, employment, addictions counseling, translation for legal documents and medical services, and hosts cultural celebrations for the whole community.

Adamino describes himself with dry humor and a twinkle in his eye as a Puerto Rican-Pennsylvania Dutch, Methodist-Mennonite.

Adamino also has a heart for the spiritual needs of the Latino people. John Lenko, a retired missionary to Costa Rica who lived in the Pottstown area, prophetically identified for Adamino that "God has brought you here for a purpose." But the Methodists in Pottstown could not imagine how to address this vision, and as a "conservative Methodist," Adamino struggled to connect with the "hippie" style of the Methodist young people in the United States at that time. So John and Adamino organized the first Spanish ministry in the Pottstown area, which met at a local Church of the Brethren on Sunday afternoons.

In these circles, he met Carletta Jane Yoder, a young woman with a missionary calling. As he tutored her in Spanish, she "saw the love of God in his eyes," she says. Adamino and Jane were married in 1970 and later added a daughter, Tina Marie, to their family. Together they prayed for ways to share God's love with the Spanish-speaking community. The Spanish ministry flourished until some families moved out of the area to seek employment. But seeds for a new ministry were planted with the remaining group, which faithfully gathered for prayer on Saturday evenings.

Brokenhearted, Adamino continued to face his future with courage and a lot of questions.

Open doors. Before long, a call came from New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Gabriel Matos came to Pottstown and asked Adamino for assistance in finding a place to hold Spanish worship services. God was calling for an expansion of Spanish ministries in Pottstown. Pottstown Mennonite Church opened its doors. Although the Mennonites didn't know Adamino, and he didn't know Mennonites, he was invited to teach the Bible. He and Jane became members, and Adamino became the treasurer of Iglesia Menonita Estrella de la Mañana (Morning Star Mennonite Church).

As Franconia Mennonite Conference welcomed the new congregation, Adamino's leadership was recognized in a call to serve on the conference's Mission Commission and later the conference board.

Closed doors and broken hearts. The ministry struggled for various reasons. In 1992, Jane died from complications of diabetes and lupus. Adamino continued as a leader in the congregation, as it moved to another building and called a full-time pastor, then later assumed responsibility for the Pottstown Mennonite meetinghouse when the English-speaking congregation closed. But the life of the small congregation, with differing needs and diverse backgrounds, became unsustainable.

Brokenhearted, Adamino continued to face his future with courage and a lot of questions. The work of ACLAMO continued to grow, with all the ups and downs of a nonprofit organization whose mission is always larger than its capacity to work itself out of a job. Under Adamino's capable leadership, ACLAMO established two offices, one in Norristown and another in Pottstown. Adamino's influence and connections were felt throughout the county and the state, as he served as Montgomery County's Commissioner on the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, spanning five governors for 16 years.

As a leader in Franconia Conference, Adamino was well aware of another visionary congregation as it emerged in Norristown—a deliberate wedding of three Mennonite churches, including a

Adamino Ortiz greets Lizette Melendez Figueroa and her niece Paola.
Photo by Dale D. Gehman

Latino congregation, to create Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church (NVNNL). He also felt drawn into renewed mission connections between Franconia Conference and churches in Cuba. "I fell in love with Cuba from the first minute," Adamino recalls of his first "rebuilding relationships" visit to the island in 1993. He returned to Cuba as the interpreter for another visiting group of church leaders and evangelists in 1995.

The second administration. Adamino also fell in love with a schoolteacher and administrator, Anita Ravelo. They met at a cultural competency training for Latino leaders. Anita, a Cuban immigrant from age 14, and Adamino created a new family with their four young adult daughters in 1996. Adamino lovingly refers to this marriage as the "second administration."

It's unusual when organizers in high places and with many responsibilities can actually effect change in their own families. Adamino's new in-laws in Cuba were divided over different political ideologies. Relationships were conflicted, almost nonexistent, and complicated by limited access.

Adamino determined to be an instrument of reconciliation in his new family. He found Anita's relatives and introduced himself. Before his next trip to Cuba, he and Anita produced a video featuring Anita and her three daughters singing happy birthday wishes for her father and their grandfather. He played their message for the family. Hearts melted as, one by one, family members recorded their messages of love and reconciliation for Anita. Anita accompanied Adamino on the next trip to Cuba and was joyfully reunited with her family. Because of Adamino and Anita's persistent witness and love, Anita's father, stepmother and stepsister accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Because of the family ties, Adamino and Anita could travel once a year to Cuba. They ministered with pastors and churches, preaching evangelistic services and training pastors in the Bible Institute of the Pentecostal Holiness Church. The Cuban people responded with great enthusiasm, and the ministry continues to be blessed by God.

When the Bush administration restricted family travel to Cuba to once every three years, God opened another door for Adamino's ministry in Cuba. When the local news reported Adamino's formal retirement from ACLAMO, pastors at Calvary Chapel of Norristown took note of his mission work and contacted him. They discovered a common passion and love for Cuban churches and developed a partnership with Franconia Conference around Calvary's religious license to do mission work in Cuba. This ministry includes building churches and developing a rustic camp into a site for large gatherings and trainings. Every brick and piece of equipment is prayed into place, as resources are scarce. Pastors, church leaders and congregations are covered in prayer by Adamino and pastor Tom Fry every evening.

Adamino and Anita sought a new church home in

Meet Adamino Ortiz

Favorite song: "Yo quisiera hablarte del amor de Cristo" (I would like to tell you of the love of Christ)

Favorite Scripture: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, not any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39 NIV

Favorite music: Danza, classic Puerto Rican dance music that emphasizes love of country, family, romance and culture.

Hobbies: Gardening, collecting Danza on his YouTube channel, ham radio operator

Goals for the next five years: Giving time, talent and resources to his church and conference

Annual missionary trips to Cuba: Connecting various community organizations with our fast growing Latino community.—*Sharon K. Williams*

Jim Williams, stewardship team chair at Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church, and Adamino Ortiz discuss the upcoming agenda for a church council meeting. Photo by Dale D. Gehman

I love the Spanish worship experience, but I don't feel complete until the whole congregation worships together.—Adamino Ortiz

Pottstown, hoping to find a Mennonite church that could include a ministry with Latinos. But they also heard God's call to Nueva Vida Norristown New Life. By 1998 they were immersed in the life and mission of our congregation, engaging their gifts of teaching, interpretation and leadership. They embraced the vision of an intercultural ministry and outreach that requires people of all cultures to worship, lead and work, give and take counsel together. We worship the Lord in bilingual services on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month and offer Spanish and English worship services on the second and fourth Sundays. "I love the Spanish worship experience, but I don't feel complete until the whole congregation worships together," Adamino says.

Anita taught Spanish at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa., and the Norristown Area School District. She served on Franconia Conference's Damascus Road antiracism team, and she and Adamino became a part of the Stand Together Ministry team that leads the congregation's antiracism/anti-cultural-bias ministry. When we needed an interim Hispanic pastor on the pastoral team, Adamino accepted the call to pastoral ministry, which resulted in a ministerial license for both NVNNL and Cuba.

Anita died suddenly in October 2007. In their 11 years of marriage, God used Adamino and Anita to accomplish much. It was hard for him to think of continuing the various ministries without her. But God and Adamino knew their work was not yet complete. Adamino returned briefly to ACLAMO in an interim capacity while the organization searched for a new executive director. He continued to coordinate the ministry with Cuba churches and serve the congregation. What else could the future hold?

Waiting in the wings. In times of grief, some people rediscover friendships that have been dormant for a long time. While visiting his family in Puerto Rico and working through the deaths of Anita and his brother, Adamino reconnected with Ruth Lydia Gonzalez, a señorita he met years earlier through the youth drama ministry. They had dated and contemplated marriage. But Ruth's calling was to ministry and mission work and not in the United States. They parted ways, but over the years stayed in touch, mostly through a mutual friend. Now a chaplain, Ruth invited Adamino to a retreat she was leading for people in grief.

Adamino returned to NVNNL, mysteriously happy and lighthearted. One of Ruth's pastor friends had encouraged her to rescind her previ-

In September 2010, the Philadelphia Phillies and Goya Foods honored Adamino Ortiz for his leadership with ACLAMO during Hispanic Heritage month.
Photo provided

ous refusal to marry him. The friend said, "You can help him, and he can help you. It is not good for you to be alone."

In March 2009, 44 years after their first date, we beheld the "third administration."

Ruth is a confident minister and welcomed leader at NVNNL. Her marriage to Adamino and the move to a different culture came with a good bit of sacrifice, as she was in the final steps of preparing for a new ministry in Colombia. While she has focused on learning to know her new husband, new church and new surroundings, she holds to God's vision that she will fulfill her calling in Colombia someday. She has already accompanied Adamino on three trips to Cuba, where she discovered a powerful ministry among the women pastors and lay leaders of the Cuban churches. She enjoys teaching and counseling with women and young families, both in Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico.

To God be the glory. Adamino continues his organizing work for the Latino community in a supportive, volunteer role at ACLAMO. He and Juan Guerra, the executive director, collaborate on development opportunities and board recruitment. Occasionally he serves as volunteer at the Pottstown office.

In our congregation, Adamino's primary focus is leading Enlarging Our Place in God's World, an ambitious, multifaceted capital campaign for facilities restoration and expansion of ministries of transformation and reconciliation. He also chairs the church council and serves as an elder.

In 2009, Iglesia Metodista de Dos Bocas, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, held a homecoming celebration to thank God for the 45 years of ministry made possible by Adamino's intervention (see "Help Is on the Way," page 17). His work with ACLAMO has been recognized by the Human Relations Council of Pennsylvania, and he has received the Marjorie Penny Patchkis Award for Human Rights. In September 2010, the Philadelphia Phillies and Goya Foods honored Adamino for his leadership with ACLAMO during Hispanic Heritage month (see photo at left).

Adamino celebrated his 69th birthday last December. A young "senior" perhaps, but it has not been a life without struggles and health challenges. He gives all the glory to God for his accomplishments. "I will always be available to the Lord to do anything the church asks, as long as God gives me life."

It's not over until it's over. No one would complain if Adamino and Ruth chose to slow down and enjoy their senior years together. But like Tony Campolo and countless other elders, the word retirement really is not in their vocabulary. Maybe it is retirement laced with a strong commitment to grow, be transformed and be used by God. At NVNNL, we still schedule meetings based on the Ortiz family calendar and travel plans. We do it with joy, knowing that God has plans for Adamino and Ruth's full engagement with God's kingdom agenda.

> I will always be available to the Lord to do anything the church asks, as long as God gives me life.—Adamino Ortiz

Sharon K. Williams serves as minister of worship and communications manager with Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pa.

Help is on the way

Adamino's move to Pottstown left a leadership gap at Iglesia Metodista de Dos Bocas, his home congregation, which was part of a two-congregation charge under one pastor. Adamino's responsibilities included leading the Sunday school ministry. When he returned in 1968 on vacation, he discovered that no one had been appointed to care for the Sunday school, and the pastor had moved it to Sunday afternoons. The congregation just stopped coming. The pastor showed Adamino a letter that the pastor had sent to the Methodist Superintendent, recommending that Iglesia de Dos Bocas be sold.

Adamino asked permission to lead the Sunday school for a month at the original time. He visited the people, and learned that they really wanted to come to worship and Sunday school, but not in the hottest part of the day. Adamino held an open meeting with the pastor and the people. He proposed that the congregation should leave the charge and ask the Methodist leadership for its own pastor. He knew several retired ministers who might be interested to serve the congregation.

The pastor was inflexible, and some members, including Adamino's grandfather, questioned Adamino's challenge of the pastor's authority. What else could they do? "It was a very anxious time," Adamino recalls, "a 'lose sleep' kind of situation."

In the end, 75 members signed a letter Adamino wrote, asking for a new pastor. Adamino hand-delivered the letter to the Superintendent. Their solution gained the Superintendent's support, and a new pastor was appointed to the congregation of Dos Bocas, which flourishes to this day.—*Sharon K. Williams*

Ambassadors of reconciliation

by Ched Myers and Elaine Enns

Conversion is not only an inner change of heart or a private change of mind but a revaluation of everything, at once personal and political.

At the heart of one of Paul's best-known theological formulations describing Christian conversion is a summons to a "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). This passage represents perhaps the earliest New Testament articulation of the vocation of restorative justice and peacemaking.

It is important to understand Paul's theology of reconciliation in the context of his commitment to ethnic peace and economic equity in the teeth of a hostile first-century Roman imperial society. As a member of a racial-ethnic Jewish minority that was systematically segregated within the dominant Roman society, Paul was fiercely critical of the decadence and injustice of the Roman Empire (see e.g. 1 Corinthians 2:6,8). Yet he refused to exclude Gentiles from the circle of YHWH's grace. This theology of radical inclusion was disconcerting to both Jewish ethnocentrism and Hellenistic ideologies of superiority.

In Greco-Roman antiquity the cultural, economic and political enmity between Jew and Gentile was profound. These two communities were institutionally and historically alienated—not unlike the modern legacy of racial apartheid or the protracted struggle between Israelis and Palestinians or Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Republicans in Northern Ireland. But Paul refused to abide by the social divisions around him, instead trying to build bridges called churches.

The Corinthian epistles provide the best insights into Paul's efforts to resist Roman norms of class stratification and ethnic segregation, especially his second letter, written sometime in the mid-50s C.E. Paul's own commitment to "downward mobility" tried to subvert the social fabric of the status quo, while he expected both Jewish and Gentile converts to defect from their own entitlements and loyalties. He believed his small Christian house gatherings, sprinkled around the eastern empire, should model an alternative society, liberated from top-down patronage, economic disparity and racial hostility. Two millennia later, Martin Luther King Jr. called this the vision of "a beloved community." It is this "new creation" that Paul believed Christ had called into being (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Our passage begins with two categorical declarations, the first in a string of rhetorical doublets:

"Therefore, from now on we regard no one from a human point of view …

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:16-17).

The apostle urges disciples to view things no longer "according to the flesh." The Greek "sarx" does not refer only to our bodies or our sexual passions, as Christian pietism has read it. Rather, it is Paul's favorite metaphor for the deeply-rooted, socially-conditioned worldview we inherit from our upbringing, the sum total of personal and political constructs and conventions that define a given culture—the way most folk think and act.

For example, a dominant assumption in North America is that the "moral" response to violation is punishment. To challenge this cultural conviction quickly leads to passionate and often irrational resistance that is both broad (i.e. majority opinion) and deep (welling up from the core of individual psyches). This is the power of the "flesh" in Paul's sense (see e.g. Romans 8, where the word appears 14 times). It dictates what and how we "know," constrains our imagination and locks us into habitual enslavements of all kinds.

Paul believed that this social formation is fundamentally deforming to the biblical understanding of what it means to be human. But those who are in communion with Christ have adopted a radically new perspective (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul's vocabulary of the "new creation," which eclipses the "old things that have passed away," places the whole passage in an apocalyptic (that is, world-transformative) framework. Conversion is not only an inner change of heart or a private change of mind but a revaluation of everything, at once personal and political. But Paul does not want this apocalyptic language misunderstood as implying a divinely ordained destruction of the world, as many modern fundamentalists have done. This revolution is for restoring the world through the great work of "reconciliation," a verb Paul now deploys emphatically and repeatedly.

Verses 18-19 read:

A. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to Godself through Christ,

B. "and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;

A'. "that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Godself (not counting their trespasses against them)

B'. "and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."

Each theological assertion (A) is linked immediately to a practical one (B), reiterated in a parallel doublet. Let's look at each in turn, because here we are at the core of Paul's theological vision.

The theological assertion articulates the extraordinary idea of God's conciliatory initiative. God is not portrayed as the recipient of Jesus' "sacrifice" but as the One acting through Jesus' execution. Reconciliation is not something accomplished by Christ for God or inflicted on Christ by God but forged by God in Christ. This wreaks havoc on the medieval (but still widespread) doctrine that Christ's death functions to placate an angry or offended deity. Rather, the Cross represents a restorative initiative by the divine victim toward the human offender (see Romans 5:10f). God absorbs the violent injustice of the offender and offers the gift of forgiveness. This powerful notion of the "moral authority of victim-initiative" is central to restorative justice, as we have tried to show in our book *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Vol. II* (Orbis, 2009).

Reconciliation is not something accomplished by Christ for God or inflicted on Christ by God but forged by God in Christ.

The semantic field of the verb "to reconcile" (Greek "katallassō," used only by Paul in the New Testament) is economic, not for atonement. In Aristotle it connotes an exchange of money to establish equivalence of value (we still speak of "reconciling" a bank statement). This discourse resonates with the Hebrew Bible's tradition of Sabbath and Jubilee, the unilateral seventh- and 49th-year "release" from debt-bondage (Deuteronomy 15; Leviticus 25). The apostle believed that promoting economic "equality" was part of the church's "bridging" project (see his description of the international ecclesial mutual aid project—which he calls a work of "grace"—in 2 Corinthians 8-9). God's decision "not to count our trespasses against us" (2 Corinthians 5:19) represents a reassertion of the divine economy of grace: the old "debt system" is passing away.

> Paul urges believers to renounce whatever dominant culture privileges and prejudices we have internalized in order to become a "beloved community" across lines of class, gender, sexuality, race and nation.

The practical part of the doublet (B) makes it clear, however, that in order to participate in God's Jubilee, disciples must embrace the "ministry of reconciliation" (5:18). This mandate is couched in the language of gift rather than obligation: this vocation is "given" (5:18b), the message "entrusted" to us (5:19b). Yet with the gift comes responsibility, which is taken up in 5:20-21.

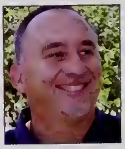
God's "appeal" (Greek "parakaleō") is both an invitation and a challenge, made through the agency of Jesus-Movement "ambassadors." In the Greek-speaking Roman Empire, "ambassador" (Greek "presbeuomen") had thoroughly political connotations (see Luke's use of the term in Luke 14:32, 19:14). A "legatus" (the Latin equivalent, whence our word "delegation") was usually appointed by the emperor to represent imperial interests in foreign lands: facilitating intelligence gathering, negotiating trade deals, wielding threats or offering compromises. But this was not Paul's meaning. While Caesar's envoys throughout the Mediterranean world strove to defeat enemies and bend nations to the will of the Pax Romana, the emissaries of Christ were to appeal to those same peoples to be reconciled to God and one another (2 Corinthians 5:20b).

The indicative mood now gives way to imperative, a transition typical of Paul's rhetorical style. Divine realities are waiting to be realized in our lives, so Paul as the emissary of Christ pleads: "Be reconciled to God." This "balancing of the books" is predicated upon making peace with those from whom one is alienated, including one's ethnic or political enemies—hence the need for "ambassadors."

The purpose of God's extraordinary initiative in Christ is so "that in him we might become the justice of God" (5:21). This key Pauline phrase, which appears some 10 times in his letters, is a polemical phrase, asserting that divine fairness is utterly opposed to Roman "iustitia" (justice). It cannot be equated with our notions of retributive justice. The engrained retributive logic of the "flesh" stipulates that debtors must be imprisoned and offenders punished. In stark contrast, God models in Christ the practice of victim-initiated reconciliation. As Christopher Marshall's important study *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment* (Eerdmans, 2001) has shown, this restorative logic lies at the center of the New Testament theology of redemption.

Later New Testament traditions referred to Paul, with no hint of irony, as an "ambassador in chains" (Ephesians 6:20). This ambassador inhabited the empire's jails because he represented God's restorative justice, which challenged the retributive politics of Caesar's world. Paul was "co-operating" with the God who suffers with all victims of personal and political violence yet who seeks to win back the offenders as well (2 Corinthians 6:1). But there is a real cost to this discipleship, which is why Paul follows his exhortation with a litany of his own nonviolent disciplines and their consequence in the harsh world of Empire (2 Corinthians 6:3-10).

Second Corinthians 5:16-21 asserts that reconciliation is the dream of God, who through Christ has modeled restorative justice as the only means of achieving it. Paul's theological indicative presses upon believers an urgent imperative: to renounce whatever dominant culture privileges and prejudices we have internalized in order to become a "beloved community" across lines of class, gender, sexuality, race and nation. May the Mennonite Church USA Convention this July take up afresh Paul's challenge and invitation to become "ambassadors of reconciliation."



Ched Myers and Elaine Enns work with Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries (www.bcm-net.org) and are members of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. This is an edited excerpt from their book Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Vol I: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking *(Orbis, 2009).*

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

This is the first of four Bible studies on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 in *The Mennonite* leading up to Pittsburgh 2011, the next Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, to be held July 4-9 in downtown Pittsburgh. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by this text and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.

Mennonite Church USA Convention • July 4-9

Pittsburgh 2011

What brings **you** to convention? ▸

Worship. Community. Renewing connections with old friends. Making new friends. Singing with thousands of people. Being inspired by speakers. Participating in seminars on all kinds of topics. Serving the local community. Visiting area attractions. Helping your children develop a sense of Mennonite identity. Discussing issues the church is facing and what it means to follow Jesus as Mennonite-Anabaptist Christians. Celebrating what unites us.

The David L. Lawrence Convention Center, site of Pittsburgh 2011. The center sits at the confluence of three major rivers.

Photo: VisitPittsburgh.com

Mennonite Church
USA

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

What brings you to

Ben and Susan Miller Setiawan, Ethan, Sammy and Aviva

Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Two years ago, my husband, Ben, and I traveled to Columbus 2009 with Ethan and Sammy, our two older children. Why would we and two of our children (grades 5 and 1) choose to spend nearly a week attending a Mennonite convention in downtown Columbus? In the process of figuring out why we should (and did) do this, we learned that convention is not just for high school youth and delegates—it's a good place for anyone interested in Mennonite Church USA and the global Mennonite church.

Ben and I were raised Mennonite on opposites sides of the globe. This has enriched our lives incredibly, since Ben experienced the label "Mennonite" in Indonesia very differently from how I experienced it in the United States. Nevertheless, we both carry a Mennonite identity and realize we have been shaped by our heritages. We recognize that while we can't "hand down" faith to our children, we can provide venues for them as Indonesian Swiss German children of Chinese descent to experience the global Mennonite family and their part in it. Ben and I try to be deliberate about doing so because we feel that a strong Mennonite heritage and identity is a gift that will serve our children and the world in which they live. Convention offered one such opportunity for Ethan and Sammy to experience being Mennonite in the larger context.

> We recognize that while we can't "hand down" faith to our children, we can provide venues for them as Indonesian Swiss German children of Chinese descent to experience the global Mennonite family and their part in it.

Having said that, I felt keenly that there was very little that was uniform about "being Mennonite" during that week in Columbus. I was reminded that "being community"—and what is a group of people identifying themselves by a single name if not some sort of community?—is difficult work. We disagree about things that we feel deeply about. We talk and listen as well as we can, yet sometimes we find it difficult to get beyond our own positions. Convention gave Ben and me opportunities to talk about these issues with our children when it seemed appropriate, doing our best to frame them as honest disagreements among people who feel strongly.

The speakers and activities were a draw for our family. Ben and I were eager to listen in on conversations going on in the wider Mennonite church, and we were very interested in hearing Jim Wallis and Shane Claiborne speak. Ben attended seminars on global themes and Christian-Muslim relations and the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Mennonites around the world. The seminar topics I chose ranged from family spirituality to financial planning to male/female roles in the congregation. We both learned a lot.

Ethan and Sammy attended the children's activities, which felt similar to Bible school for them. We dropped them off every morning at their "family groups," where they heard stories, sang songs and participated in arts and crafts (we still have the mosaic doves they made). As a family we all enjoyed evening music and performances, such as Ted & Co. and Ken Medema. Each day for lunch, we walked to the North Market District, where we relished the ethnic food and the feel of a big-city marketplace.

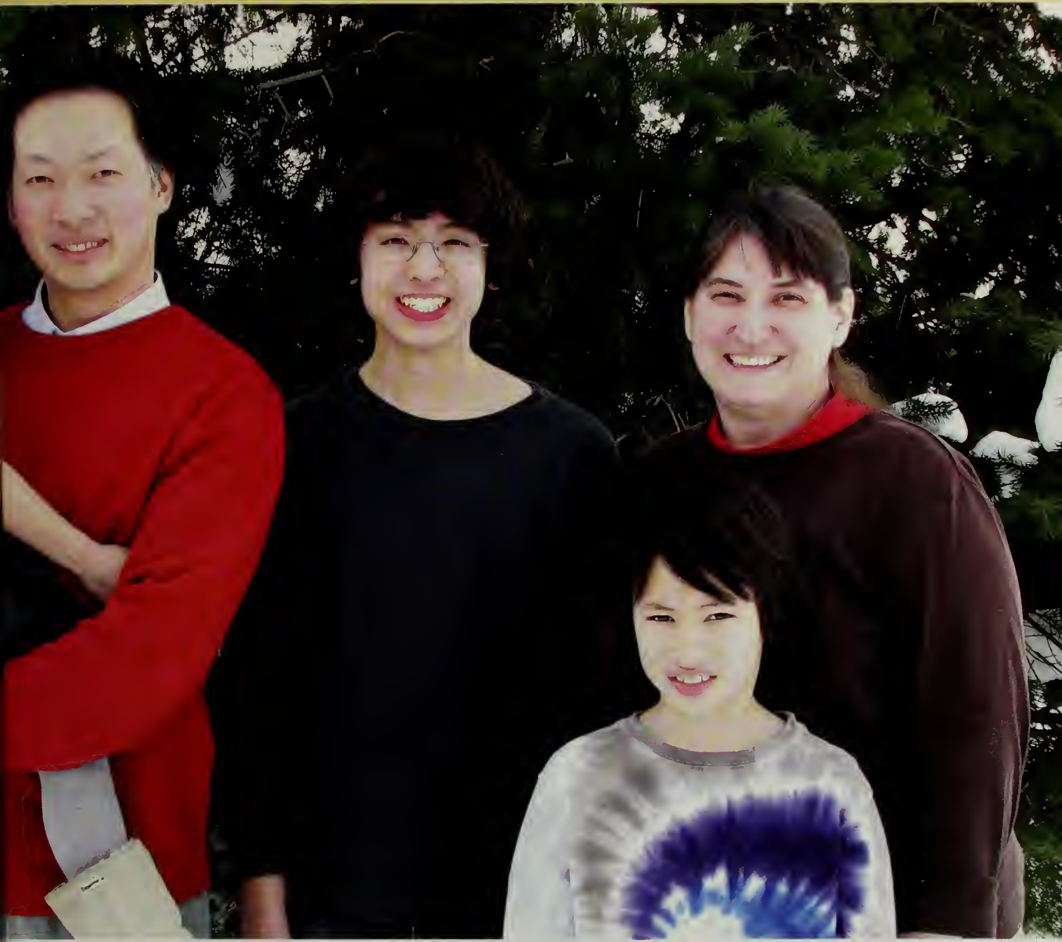
Reconnecting with friends was definitely a highlight for our whole family. Ben and I both graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College and worked at Mennonite camps. We and our children also spent five years in Baltimore. At convention, running into people we knew in college, the Baltimore youth group (When did those little kids become such young adults?) and many others we've been blessed to know was a real gift.

Admittedly convention is not your typical family getaway, but it worked well for us. We found rest and relax-

convention?

Ben and Susan Miller Setiawan and their children (left to right), Aviva, Ethan and Sammy.

Photo by Annette Brill Bergstresser



ation in nearby green space, an afternoon at the Columbus Zoo, leisurely-sipped coffee and conversations with friends old and new. We chewed on new ideas, Bible stories and stimulating seminar discussions. We sat and soaked up the voices of thousands of people raised in song and added our voices as well.

And so we are we planning on attending Pittsburgh 2011. This time Ethan will be with the junior youth, Sammy will be in the elementary group, and Aviva will join us and attend the preschool group. We look forward to joining the conversations of the wider church and reminding ourselves of why we have chosen to be Mennonite. All in all, we think it will be a week well spent.

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

Pittsburgh 2011 What to know

Bridges to (the) Cross

This year's convention theme—"Bridges to (the) Cross"—is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and the 446 bridges that span Pittsburgh. The theme is twofold: First, as instruments of Christ's reconciliation, we, too, have many "bridges to cross." Second, God calls us to shape our culture as ambassadors for Christ instead of continuing to have our culture shape us. We are called to serve as "bridges to the cross."

"We Are the Church"

Convention planners hope to foster an increased sense of belonging and ownership for racial/ethnic constituents during convention. Throughout the week, convention-goers will have opportunities to experience the diverse ethnic and cultural traditions of Mennonite Church USA, as racial/ethnic constituents serve as speakers and leaders of worship, music and seminars for youth and adults.

On "We Are the Church" Day (July 6), the events and activities will have a multicultural focus. That evening, the main events will be the racial/ethnic constituency group gatherings, the Intercultural Gathering of the People dinner and a youth concert featuring ASON.

"As Mennonite Church USA explores racial healing through restorative justice, the committee recognizes the importance of coming to God's table not as guests, but as owners," says Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA and a member of the Intercultural Relations Reference Committee.

"While the initial vision was to have multicultural programming on one day of the convention, this 'day' has become a central theme in the planning for the entire convention," says Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. "Instead of having a day that has a drastically different feel from the rest of the week, we are choosing to better incorporate racial/ethnic gifts and talents throughout the week."

A "green" convention

The David Lawrence Convention Center (DLCC) is the first "green" convention center in the world and the only meeting venue to be awarded the Gold LEED® Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (see www.greenfirst.us). Also, convention planners are working with Mennonite Creation Care Network to consider sustainability and environmental stewardship issues in planning the gathering. For tips on "greening" convention, go to www.mennoniteusa.org/convention and choose *Why come?* and *Sustainability.*

Servant projects

Participants will be transported to different sites throughout the city to provide services such as working with community children or elderly/nursing home residents, doing yard work/trash pickup or building repair, or serving at a food bank/homeless shelter/soup kitchen.

MennoNight Fun Run 5k/10k

A 5K/10K MennoNight Fun Run will be held at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 7. The course will take participants on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail System with aid stations along the way. Everyone is welcome to participate: competitive runners, recreational walkers, seniors, baby joggers and wheelchair athletes. Prizes will be awarded to the top two male and female finishers in each 10-year age group.

Adult worship at Columbus 2009 mPress photo

Evening events

- **Wednesday:** "Common Threads" with Tony Brown and John Sharp
- **Wednesday:** Racial Healing Task Group vignettes and immigration film screening
- **Wednesday concert:** ASON (see page 29)
- **Thursday:** Trash fashion show
- **Thursday:** Hymn sing
- **Friday concert:** Stellar Kart, a Christian pop punk band from Phoenix, Ariz. The single "Me and Jesus" from their 2006 album *We Can't Stand Sitting Down* hit number 1 for seven weeks on the Hot Christian Songs chart and won the 2007 Dove Award for "Rock/Contemporary Recorded Song."
- **Friday:** Ryan and Friends

Coffeehouse

Traditional Indonesian dancers, California hip-hop, local Pittsburgh recording artists along with comedy, history, a cappella and a rock band or two are some of the acts planned for the nightly coffeehouse.

Recreation hall

Daily "Minute to Win It" contests, Ping-Pong, volleyball and basketball are among recreation options for convention participants.

Exhibit hall

Mennonite Church USA agencies, colleges/seminaries and other Mennonite-related organizations will have booths in the exhibit hall.

Financial aid

Congregations are encouraged to consider giving a tithe to the financial aid fund to assist those who are unable to raise enough funds for their convention expenses. Participants can donate via the registration form or by contacting the convention office. Participants needing financial assistance can download an application from www.mennoniteusa.org/convention (under "Forms") or call 574-523-3048. Note: Financial aid may be used only to cover registration fees.

Volunteering

At Columbus 2009, more than 250 volunteers donated their time to help the gathering run smoothly. Depending on the number of hours served, volunteers may receive a full or partial refund of their registration fees. Those interested should indicate their availability when registering.

Members of the historical committees of the General Conference Mennonite Church and GC districts meeting for business and to commemorate the 275th anniversary in the Germantown (Pa.) Mennonite Church in July 1958.

Photo provided

Mennonite Historical Committee:
Celebrating 100 years of history

At the turn of the 20th century, North American Mennonites were grappling with matters such as the implications of higher education, expanding overseas missions, urbanization, and leisure-time activities such as theater and ball games. At issue was how to maintain time-honored beliefs and practices amid great change.

100
Years *of*
Minding
Mennonite
Memory

Two groups, one in the Mennonite Church (MC) and one in the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), came to the realization that utilizing the stories and learnings of the past could be an important strategy for nurturing future faithfulness.

So in 1911, each group—acting independently of the other—established the first historical organization for its denomination. MC delegates appointed a committee to write "an authentic Church History," while 20 GC members formed the Mennonite Historical Association to gather and make available for research "materials of historical and cultural value."

At Pittsburgh 2011, the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee—as successor to the GC and MC initiatives—will celebrate a century of historical ministry. Activities will include seminars on topics ranging from archiving tips to Hutterites plus the introduction of a redesigned and revamped *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, the Historical Committee's quarterly magazine of popular Mennonite/Anabaptist history.

The Historical Committee also will sponsor an exhibit on racial/ethnic diversity in the church and present several seminars featuring recent historical research on race and related issues in the church.

—Rich Preheim, director, Historical Committee

Pittsburgh 2011 Adult gathering

Many adults come to convention year after year to worship, go to seminars, participate in delegate sessions, attend special dinners and receptions, socialize, work on servant projects and enjoy recreation, concerts and other activities.

Delegates

Congregations, area conferences and constituency groups of Mennonite Church USA are encouraged to make their voices heard by sending delegates—including young adults—to convention. Free registration is available to congregations who have not sent delegates since 2003. Young adult delegates are invited to take part in the YODA (YOung adult Delegate to Assembly) program, which is designed to help them become more involved in the work of the church.

Young adult activities

Special activities are being planned where young adults (ages 18-30) can connect with their peers. There will be a young adult lounge, late-night gatherings, and special servant projects.

Seminars

More than 180 seminars, including some in Spanish, will be offered at convention. A list of adult, youth and intergenerational seminars is available at www.mennoniteusa.org/convention.

Pastors Day (Monday, July 4)

Leading communities of healing and hope: Participants will explore stories of ministry with people of faith from various socioeconomic backgrounds. Speakers will include Mary Thiessen Nation, affiliate professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and John Stahl-Wert, author and president/CEO of Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation.

AMBS on-site seminary courses

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will offer for credit two graduate-level courses (Principles of Youth Ministry and Thirteen Ways of Looking at Zacchaeus: Luke's Quest Stories and Transformational Bible Study) and one undergraduate course (Pastoral Studies Distance Education, Unit 1: Church and Ministry) at Pittsburgh 2011. Participants will have several face-to-face sessions at Pittsburgh 2011, with reading and writing assignments to be completed before and after convention week. See: www.ambs.edu/Pittsburgh2011

Timothy Seibel

Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss.

As a young adult representing Jubilee Mennonite in the Delegate Assembly at Columbus 2009, I learned so much about how our denomination operates. It was exhilarating to talk with excited young adults and youth who are realizing that in several years, we will be leading the church. We imagined where the church will be by then and how much more the church can do to flood the world with God's hope and peace. It was exciting to sit in the Delegate Assembly with 800 representatives and Executive Board members and hear reviews from church committees and collectively discuss and pass statements on issues such as human trafficking, national health care and sexuality.

And the adult and youth worship sessions were phenomenal. At one of them, the children's activity leaders brought a 180-member children's choir on stage to lead us in the song "Feel the Rhythm." Afterward the leaders blessed the children and told them, "You are our future, and you have much to teach us." The whole arena erupted in deafening applause and cheering. That's how it was at every worship session. The energy was contagious, and the sermons were life-changing.

Convention provides a place to share ideas. There were more than 170 seminars on all kinds of topics. Some of them were hands-on, such as one in which Leo Hartshorn led participants in learning peacemaking and teamwork skills through coordinated drumming on plastic buckets.

The highlight of my trip was joining the awesome Jubilee youth for dinner each day. I enjoyed hearing about the seminars they attended, the youth worship sessions, the friends they made. Sometimes there were some profound and spirited conversations. For example, we discussed tough questions such as, "To whom should we pledge allegiance, God or country?," "Is war always inherently evil?" and "How can we be thankful for our freedoms without becoming nationalistic and idolizing our country?"

In regards to the issue of homosexuality, our youth also discussed how we can love all people while holding true to our interpretation of Scripture. They heard one another out and disagreed well. I sensed that they were united with a common vision for service and mission and a love for the church.

As I think about the church of the future, I know that we are in good hands. As these young people become involved in the church in various ways, they will ensure that we continue to become a people of grace, joy and peace to impact the world with God's healing and hope.

I returned to the South with God's Spirit in my lungs and a renewed commitment to be a witness for the Prince of Peace amid a nationalistic evangelical culture. Thank you, Jubilee, for entrusting me with the honor of representing our congregation at the convention.

Adult speakers and worship leaders

Speakers

Monday evening (joint worship): Focus on the cross

Shane Hipps joined Mars Hill, Grand Rapids, Mich., as a teaching pastor in early 2010. Formerly he served as lead pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz. He is the author of *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church.*

Tuesday: Bridge to new life

Madeline Maldonado is associate pastor of Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvación in Fort Myers, Fla. She is also a district minister for Southeast Mennonite Conference, a Mennonite Mission Network board member, and director of finances for Iglesia Menonita Hispana.

Wednesday: Life on the bridge

Betsy Headrick McCrae is pastor at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo. She served with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron and Zaire, and also lived in Belgium and Vietnam. She studied at Hesston (Kan.) College, Goshen (Ind.) College, San Francisco State University and Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary.

Alfred "Al" Taylor, a native of Harlem, N.Y., is pastor of Infinity Mennonite Church, New York, and founder of Man Up in Harlem. He is the New York City chief of staff for State Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell, for whom he has worked since 1984. He is completing a Master of Divinity degree from Nyack (N.Y.) College/Alliance Theological Seminary.

Isaac S. Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship. A son of Latin American immigrants, he grew up in the Roman Catholic Church until his family joined the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. A graduate of Duke Divinity School, he is co-author of *Presence: Giving and Receiving God.*

Thursday: Bridges to cross

Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe has served as an evangelist, a Brethren in Christ district secretary, a conference secretary lecturer at a Bible school and currently as Brethren in Christ bishop. He was elected vice president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) at the 2003 meeting of the MWC General Council in Zimbabwe, and became president during the General Council's 2009 meeting in Paraguay.

Friday: Be the bridge

Ervin R. Stutzman is executive director for Mennonite Church USA. Formerly he served as dean and professor of church ministries at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. He has also served the Mennonite Church as a pastor, district overseer, missions administrator, conference moderator and, from 2001 to 2003, moderator for Mennonite Church USA.

Worship leaders

Sue Conrad Howes of Lancaster, Pa., began as a development associate for Mennonite Mission Network in February, having served East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster for five years as associate pastor. She is a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, Penn State University and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Glen Guyton is associate executive director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA. Previously, with his wife, Cyndi, Glen served as youth pastor and in other ministry roles for more than 17 years at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va.

Music leaders

Nicole R. Francisco is leader of the C3 Worship Team and co-leader of the Young Adult Ministry at Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va. A graduate of The College of William & Mary and Regent University School of Business, she serves as finance director of Calvary Community Church and Christian Academy.

Edward Raymond James, IV, is music director for Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va. He is also a pianist, recording artist, classically trained lyric baritone and songwriter/composer. He has a B.A. in music from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.

Special guest

Michael Bishop is pastor of music and worship at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He has a B.A. in music education from Eastern Mennonite University and studied at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, N.J.

Samantha Bender / Mennonite Church USA

Mountain States youth pastors arrange joint bus trip

Andrew Clouse, associate pastor for youth, Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church

When Natalie Anderson of Albuquerque, N.M., attends the opening worship session at Pittsburgh 2011 this summer, it will be the first time she's ever been in a room with more than 200 Mennonites.

Natalie, a 14-year-old member of the Albuquerque Mennonite Church youth group, is one of nearly 40 youth from the Mountain States Mennonite Conference who will spend 27 hours on a charter bus to Pittsburgh for the biennial youth gathering.

When I asked Natalie why she signed up for the trip, she said, "I want to meet some other Mennonite youth from other churches because I feel isolated here."

This sentiment is nothing new for youth from this area conference, which consists of a few small, scattered congregations in New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. Churches here are not only spread out but are far from the Mennonite "hubs." Albuquerque is 300 miles closer to Mexico City than to Pittsburgh.

As a result of this isolation, youth like Natalie aren't even sure what being Mennonite means, or how to address the confused questions that pop up when she tells friends that she is Mennonite.

"We're the only Mennonite church in Albuquerque, so when I talk to my friends about it, they don't know what I'm talking about," she said. "They're like, 'What? What is that?' And then some of my friends thought that Mennonites were old fashioned and wear things on their heads. And another one thought I said 'men in tights.'"

Convention may be the only time many of these youth experience the sense of belonging that comes from worshiping with thousands of other youth who also identify as Mennonite. If they do not have the opportunity to connect with the Mennonite Church during their formative high school years, they may never get the chance.

With these realities in mind, the four paid youth pastors in our conference brainstormed how we could turn convention into an extended experience that would provide space for the youth in our conference to form deep bonds with each other and the broader church. The idea of a cross-country bus trip was born.

"We're trying to create a significant amount of time and captured space where our youth can get to know each other and form a stronger identity with the conference," says Tory Doerksen, pastor for child and youth faith formation at First Mennonite Church in Denver. "We want them to know they are not alone as Colorado Anabaptist/Mennonite Christians."

Michael Martin, youth pastor at Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., agrees: "Riding on a bus for 30 hours with other youth helps develop relational skills, expand a youth's network and helps make a better connection to MC USA as a whole."

The trip will not be without challenges. From Albuquerque, for example, we will need to spend a day on each end of the trip commuting to and from our launching point in Denver, meaning we will be gone a total of 11 days—a demanding time commitment for over-involved youth and sponsors.

Another challenge is cost. We expect to spend at least $1,000 per participant for travel, food, hotel and registration fees. Our small youth group will need to raise nearly $7,000, and First Mennonite in Denver will have to pull in close to $15,000. This translates into hours of barbecues, service auctions, chili cook-offs and dinner theaters.

We decided that the chance to connect our youth to one another, challenging speakers and a new part of the country was worth the expense. As youth pastors, we pray that the week-and-a-half of being squeezed on a bus and run ragged in Pittsburgh will result in changed lives and a deeper faith.

"I hope they experience a little bit of discomfort in order to grow," Martin says. "Being on a bus might give a literal meaning to that."

Youth speakers and worship leaders

Speakers

Monday evening (joint worship): Focus on the cross

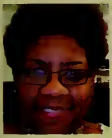
Tuesday morning: God's point of view

Shane Hipps joined Mars Hill, Grand Rapids, Mich., as a teaching pastor in early 2010. Formerly he served as lead pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz. He is the author of *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* and *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith.*

Tuesday afternoon: Reconcile … what?

Ted Swartz is a comedian, actor and playwright from Harrisonburg, Va., who founded Ted & Co. He invites audiences to peel away centuries of biblical interpretation to rediscover the plain and humorous humanity of those who walked toward faith. He has created/co-created 16 full-length shows, a dozen one-act plays, award-winning videos and a trunk full of comedy sketches.

Wednesday morning: Bridges under construction in Christ



Calenthia S. Dowdy, Ph.D., is professor of youth ministry and cultural anthropology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa. She grew up Baptist and is now part of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia. Previously her work included youth ministry, junior high and kindergarten teaching, college chaplaincy, camp direction and missions.

Wednesday afternoon: The new has come: Bring it on!

David Maldonado is senior pastor of Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvación in Fort Myers, Fla., the church where he became a Christian. He pastors with his wife, Madeline, and has served this congregation as pastor for 17 years. He often teaches and preaches in Guatemala.

Thursday morning: Opportunity for unity

"We are called to extend the grace we have been given to those around us": a story of mother/daughter reconciliation.

Friday morning: Be the bridge

Jeniffer Dake is driven by the desire to see young people become discerning and committed followers of Jesus. She is one of the founding members of Michael W. Smith's youth center, Rocketown, in Nashville, Tenn., and has toured as a speaker with Michael, Stacy Orrico, Worship Together and Point of Grace. She now travels across America, speaking to young people about how to develop an ever-growing passionate and educated faith.

Friday afternoon: Here we go!

Brenda Matthews, affectionately known as "Mama" Brenda, is a poet pregnant with purpose. She seeks to plant seeds of change in the hearts of those who have fallen through the cracks. She has traveled throughout the United States and the African continent to deliver her message and has shared the stage with legendary performers Stevie Wonder, John Legend, Roberta Flack and Willie Nelson.

Worship leaders

Shé Hall lives in Hampton, Va., where she works as a freelance web/graphic designer and attends Calvary Community Church. She also works with Calvary's Generation Youth Ministries and is a coleader for the young adult fellowship. Shé is a recent graduate of Regent University with an M.A. in communications—digital media.

Derek Yoder served as a youth pastor at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kan., for 7.5 years and is currently in voluntary service at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., with his wife and three children. Derek graduated from Hesston College and Eastern Mennonite University and has a master's degree in social work.

Music leader

Jeremy Kempf is director of music and worship at Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz., where he lives with his wife and daughter. He graduated from Hesston (Kan.) College and Greenville (Ill.) College with a degree in contemporary Christian music. He spent several years as lead guitarist in the Christian rock/worship band Thirstborne. This will be his third convention as music leader.

Special guest

ASON is a rapper and youth speaker with a knack for slipping uplifting messages into his music. His first three albums have sold more than 42,000 copies and song downloads. His latest album, "Two 4 ONE," is a hip-hop/R&B collaboration with Christy Love.

Pittsburgh 2011 Children's and junior youth gatherings

First-time convention participants become pen pals

Tara Gleason

Emma Cordell

Two fourth graders who met at Columbus 2009 have continued their friendship as pen pals.

While both Tara Gleason of Findlay, Ohio, and Emma Cordell of McConnellsburg, Pa., were nervous about coming to convention for the first time, they said that once they met the other children and got involved in games and crafts, they felt more comfortable.

Emma and Tara were partners during the week and enjoyed a field trip to the Columbus Zoo together with their parents. On the last day, they decided to become pen pals.

"When we left convention, I had a friend to write to and a great memory," Emma says. "I was very glad I came."

Both girls say they are looking forward to seeing each other at Pittsburgh 2011. "I'm also excited to be able to have fun at convention once again," Emma adds.

Tara's grandparents, Art and Mary Newcomer, brought her and her brother to convention.

"I was a little scared and did not know what to expect, but my brother, who had been before, convinced me I should try it," Tara says.

Emma came with her father, Craig Cordell.

"I really wanted to go, since I had never been to a convention before, and it was so close to home," says Craig, whose wife and son could not attend due to other commitments. "I was honestly surprised and pleased when Emma said she'd go with me."

Craig says that while the volunteers with the children were friendly and welcoming, he still worried about Emma the first morning. His fears were allayed when he picked her up for lunch.

"She talked and talked about what she had done and about the other children in her group," he says. "Every day after we ate lunch together, she was eager to get back to her group as soon as possible. As the week wound down, she started talking about the next convention. She can't wait for Pittsburgh and to see Tara again."

Maria Gleason, Tara's mom, reflects, "It was neat to see how Tara and Emma became friends and really neat to see them writing letters back and forth since the convention. I know Tara is looking forward to the next convention."

Craig adds that he was pleased with the thoughtful planning that went into the children's gathering and with the volunteers who worked with the children.

"I think Emma's first experience at convention was so good that it has set her on a path of lifelong convention attendance," he says. "And I couldn't be happier about that."—*Mennonite Church USA*

Contact information

Mennonite Church USA Convention Planning
P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245

Fax: 316 283-0454 • Phone: 574 523-3048
Toll-free: 866 866-2872 • E-mail: CarolE@mennoniteusa.org

Kindergarten-5th grade

Coordinators: Amy Nissley and Heidi Gingerich
Children in this group will use curriculum titled "Kids Can Build Bridges," produced especially for the Pittsburgh convention by Mennonite Publishing Network.
Field trip: Carnegie Science Center

Preschool

Coordinators: Emily and Jodi Ferguson
Children will be engaged with Bible stories, crafts, dress-up, games and outdoor play.

Infants/toddlers

Coordinators: Kathy Miller and Michelle Yoder
There will be wagon rides, creative play time, stories and more. Many helpers will be available to make sure that each child receives individual care.

Junior youth gathering

Coordinators: Kendra Horst, Torrey Ball, Todd Lehman and Ami Miller
The junior youth gathering will include worship, recreation, a service experience and excursions to Laurelville Mennonite Church Center and the Carnegie Science Center. Activities/meals will take place in the Westin Allegheny Ballroom, which is connected to the convention center.

Speaker: Peter Eberly, lead pastor of Eastside Church, a church plant in Harrisonburg, Va., and father of four.

Music leaders: The Ransom Project

Drama: John Bromels

A bus ride reminds a prisoner how God has changed him.

The bus ride

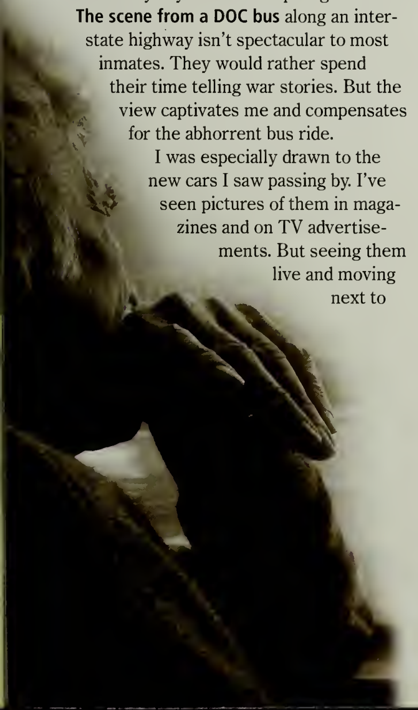
by Roy A. Borges

My transfer to another prison came unexpectedly. I had no idea where I was going. Leg shackles were cuffed to my ankles before I climbed on board the bus. They hurt and made the four-hour trip even more uncomfortable. This was not my first bus ride or my last.

The Department of Corrections has a fleet of buses it uses to transport inmates to prisons all over the state. If you have never ridden on a DOC bus with 45 inmates, I can guarantee you it's an experience you will never forget or want to repeat. The inmates are squashed together like sardines in a can. Their property is laid on the floor or in our laps. Most inmates start smoking the minute the bus starts. No one is supposed to smoke on the bus, but it's hardly ever enforced.

I always try to get a seat near the window so I can breathe some fresh air—and for the view. For most of my 21 years of incarceration, my view has been from a cell window.

Occasionally a mockingbird will appear and interrupt part of the panorama. But looking at razor-wire fences every day is not an inspiring view.



The scene from a DOC bus along an interstate highway isn't spectacular to most inmates. They would rather spend their time telling war stories. But the view captivates me and compensates for the abhorrent bus ride.

I was especially drawn to the new cars I saw passing by. I've seen pictures of them in magazines and on TV advertisements. But seeing them live and moving next to me is amazingly different.

Twenty-one years ago I owned a body shop. I prided myself in my knowledge of cars. I knew the make, year and model of most of them, even the foreign cars. But the only ones I recognized now were the older models.

"What kind of car is that shiny new one there, Roy?" the inmate beside me asked.

To my chagrin I shrugged my shoulders.

"That's a Cadillac," another inmate said.

"A Caddy?" I said, incredulous.

I used to work for Nolan Brown Cadillac with my father. Cadillacs were my favorite cars, and I owned several of them from the time I was 17 until I came to prison. I couldn't recognize them now. Then I noticed the emblem on the hood. "It's a Caddy," I smiled.

"Hey Roy?" someone asked. "Do you think they will have cars when you get out?"

"I don't know," I said. He must have been reading my mind. "Cars sure have changed. Who knows what the future will bring," I said. But the unchanging emblem on the hood of the new Cadillac gave me hope.

I am no longer the man I used to be.

It was not a bad bus ride, I concluded as we arrived at my new location. I got to see new cars I never saw before, and it reminded me how much things had changed since my incarceration. How much I have changed. My hair is gray, and I have some wrinkles I never had before. But the biggest change is the change God has performed inside me. I am no longer the man I used to be. God is making me into the man he wants me to be, and God's not finished yet.

The sun shone on my one good eye as I walked off the bus. The familiar scene of the razor-wire fences again dominated my view. Hope, however, dominated my thoughts. It reminded me that no matter how much the world changes I can walk into the future confident that no matter what happens, God, the emblem of my life, is faithful. He never changes.

So as I step into my new reality I remember: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Roy A. Borges is a prisoner in Mayo, Fla.

Special **needs** special **abilities**

by Erin R. DuBois

They can attend school, hold down jobs and turn the key in the door of their own apartments. They have won the legal battle for inclusion, but by the time they land in the pew at church, they may be too exhausted to fight for something more precious than their rights. Friendship is a gift the law can never guarantee to people with developmental disabilities. Churches across the United States, however, are reaping the rewards of building genuine relationships with those in their midst who are epitomized not by their disabilities but by their rare abilities to deepen the congregation's spiritual life.

Finding friendship in the faith community

GRACE MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP
- PHIL LEHMAN
HO. INHERITS WHAT?
VE GOT TO BE KIDDIN
0 WORSHIP 10:30
ASTOR RICHARD EARLY

Junior Shifflett (left) and Joey Taylor in front of their congregation's sign. Photo by Tara Torkelson

"They have their rights and laws and they can sue. They can fight all week, but they come to a service and don't want to have to put themselves forward in the faith community," says Joe Landis, executive director of Peaceful Living, a Mennonite Health Services Alliance member organization based in Harleysville, Pa. Peaceful Living provides community-based services to people with developmental disabilities.

Sharing their stories

Friendship is what makes people flourish, according to Landis, and Peaceful Living is helping local faith communities, including two synagogues and a Hindu temple, establish the mutual give-and-take of friendship with the special needs population. Sometimes the starting point is as simple as finding out where that population exists.

Peaceful Living staff discovered the magnitude of the church-going special needs population by conducting a survey in 2000 of approximately 100 local congregations and identifying 500 people with disabilities. At the end of its Honoring a Place conference in 2008, Peaceful Living staff asked 10 faith communities to commit to including people with disabilities over the next two years.

Peaceful Living encourages the faith communities it supports to identify members' needs by completing their own congregational surveys. A congregational coach then interviews people with disabilities and their families, bringing before the church leadership the stories of those who may not be able to speak for themselves. "Everybody has their own amounts of suffering," Landis says. "Until it's in your family, you don't know, and until you hear somebody's story, you don't know."

> Until it's in your family, you don't know, and until you hear somebody's story, you don't know.—Joe Landis

Revolutionizing Sunday school: Tyler's story

Bob and Regina Rutt experienced the solace of having their family's story heard by members of Blooming Glen Mennonite (Pa.) Church. When the Rutts began attending the church in 1991, they found that church members readily assisted

Dawn reaches out to greet "Heidi," a therapy dog, a regular member of the Rainbow Room at Calvary Church of Souderton, Pa., brought every Sunday by Dr. Sharon Minninger of the Telford Veterinary Hospital in Telford Pa.
Photo by Joe Landis

them in practical ways, such as holding the door open when they arrived with their wheelchair-bound son.

Tyler, who passed away seven years ago at the age of 20, sustained a brain injury from oxygen deprivation at birth. Progressing in development to that of a 6-month old, he required total physical care. Although he was legally blind, Tyler came to recognize church members by their voices, laughing and smiling when they greeted him.

"He developed a lot of friends in the congregation," Bob Rutt says. One of the most profound ways the congregation reached out, according to Bob Rutt, was during the family's first summer at the church. Members Ruth Yoder and Bronwyn Histand visited the Rutts' home to discuss how Tyler could have a meaningful Sunday school experience that would still allow his parents to attend Sunday school with their own age group. "We came up with something unique and very much of a blessing for Tyler and other congregation members," Bob Rutt says.

Eight women volunteered on a rotating schedule to spend the Sunday school period reading and singing with Tyler. Tyler loved music and the sound of the human voice and looked forward to these times, as did the volunteers, according to Bob Rutt. "I know it was a stretch for many of them," Bob Rutt says. "They had never spent much time with a child that was developmentally and physically disabled ... there was a bit of a learning curve but they were courageous. Tyler was blessed with all these new friends, and I think the ladies were blessed with a relationship with a special child."

In for the long haul

After the Honoring a Place conference, church members formed a committee geared toward making the church an even more welcoming place for people with disabilities and their families. The church renewed its commitment at Peaceful Living's 2010 Divine Power of Friendship conference, resolving to offer a four-week-long worship series and Sunday school elective on inclusion.

"We want to adopt this as part of our church philosophy rather than a project with an end date," church member Robin Long said at the 2010 conference while reporting on the church's progress over the last two years. Thirty church members attended the elective taught by Courtney Smith, Peaceful Living's director of congregational and community education, according to Landis. A congregation's willingness to explore options and accept people as they are is what the families of people with disabilities need most, according to Bob Rutt. The Rutts felt their presence at church was appreciated, even though Tyler made noises as his way of participating in the worship music.

"It almost has to be a customized kind of arrangement because every person with disabilities is unique," Rutt says.

Getting out of the pew

Grace Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Va. also finds ways for individuals to use their unique gifts to bless the congregation. The church collaborates with Pleasant View, Inc., another Mennonite Health Services Alliance member organization, which offers residential and community-based services in the Broadway, Va., area. Pleasant View staff believe the individuals they serve should have the opportunity to express their faith as they choose, according to executive director Nancy Hopkins-Garriss. While some have no interest in attending church, others attend various denominations, and one participates in mission work.

Staff used to take individuals to the same church, where they all sat in a pew together. They were going to church but were not truly part of the congregation, according to Hopkins-Garriss. Now a staff person initially accompanies the individual to a church of their choice, backing away over time as the congregation steps forward to get the person connected.

"We really want it to become their church and not part of their program," Hopkins-Garriss says.

Powerful pray-ers: Joey and Junior's stories

Joey Taylor and Junior Shifflett, two individuals served by Pleasant View, have made Grace Mennonite Fellowship their church home. "They're just a part of the church like you and I would be," says Tamra Wilson-Puffenbarger, Pleasant View human resources director and a member of Grace Mennonite Fellowship. Both men enjoy singing praise music and have become unofficial greeters, shaking hands as they welcome other members of the congregation, Wilson-Puffenbarger says.

At the fellowship meal held the first Sunday of the month, they contribute not only food but labor, volunteering to set up chairs and ensuring the room is ready by the time church members arrive.

The congregation has been especially touched by Joey and Junior's participation in prayer, assistant pastor Mark Landis says. During sharing time, people may express particular needs so that others can gather around them and pray. Taylor and Shifflett take part by laying their hands on the person and joining in prayer for them.

"It doesn't hinder anything," Landis says. "When they want to be a part of something, we make room for them."

Their faithful attendance spurs on other church members, since Taylor and Shifflett look forward to the Sunday worship service as a crucial part of their week. "I used to see Joey every day when I came into the office, and I'd better not have missed church," Wilson-Puffenbarger says. "He would ask where I was and say he would see me at church. He was kind of my conscience."

One way church members can look after the needs of others is by offering them a ride to church, since transportation tends to be a major obstacle preventing people with disabilities from attending.

An attitude adjustment

Pleasant View pastor Dave Gullman says many churches will readily make physical adaptations to their buildings to accommodate people with disabilities, but adjusting attitudes can be a more difficult matter. A few people must be willing to see the person with disabilities as a person first and lead the way for others to draw them into fellowship. "It takes some energy, and that's often another obstacle," Gullman says. "People feel they come to church to have their needs met, and now they have someone else to look after." One way church members can look after the needs of others is by offering them a ride to church, since transportation tends to be a major obstacle preventing people with disabilities from attending, according to Gullman.

With fewer staff on hand at Pleasant View on Sundays, transportation was a problem for Taylor and Shifflett until Grace Mennonite Fellowship pastor Richard Early volunteered to drive them. Because they arrive early with the pastor, Taylor and Shifflett are able to spend additional time serving the church by assisting with tasks before the worship service begins.

"Thinking about some churches where people have been included well, they say they have learned about a different facet of who God is through that person," Gullman says. "When a church is open to the abilities and gifts a person does have and doesn't focus on the disabilities … the person with disabilities blossoms … and the church becomes more real and genuine."

Erin R. DuBois is a free-lance writer in Souderton, Pa.

A sense of belonging

Mim Shirk is vice president with Mennonite Health Services Alliance of Mennonite Church USA.

Congregations can be supportive communities for people with disabilities and their families.

Speaking at Methacton Mennonite Church in Norristown, Pa., Joe Landis, executive director of Peaceful Living in Harleysville, Pa., interviewed Allen Gehman, a Peaceful Living friend, asking, "Allen, what does the church mean to you?" Allen swept his arm across the congregation and beamed. "Joe, it's like having friends—forever." The congregation responded with applause.

In 1990, the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability. It mandated access where there had been none. But the ADA is limited. Jennie Weiss Block wrote in *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities* (Continuum, 2002) that our society has come a long way in giving those with disabilities access, but access alone is not enough. In addition to access, people need friendships.

For many of us, church is a place we come together with our friends. On Sunday morning and throughout the week, we worship together and share about our lives. When there's a crisis, we are eager to respond and support each other.

Congregations can be partners with local organizations to embrace the gifts of people with developmental and other disabilities.

People living with disabilities, however, may not be able to take part in congregational life in the way the rest of us do. Families are often embarrassed to bring their loved ones who have developmental disabilities to church. Their physical appearance may make others uncomfortable, or their behavior may disrupt the planned worship. Or the extent of care required may make it impossible to get to church.

All too often, families of people with developmental disabilities become distanced from the church and from the love and friendship that others of us take for granted in our congregational lives. When this happens, the congregation may be unaware of what the family is going through. By noticing and asking what a family needs, a congregation can extend support and friendship.

In John 15:12, Jesus says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

As Anabaptists, we take Jesus' words seriously and do our best to live them out. Belonging to a community is central to our theology, so it's no surprise that when Mennonites created new ministries for people with developmental disabilities, providing a sense of belonging was a core component of the mission. Often founded by families desiring a secure home for the child of aging parents, these organizations went beyond providing for people's physical needs of housing and shelter. They included holistic attention to their social and spiritual needs as well.

Today there are 12 organizations in the MHS Alliance network serving people with developmental disabilities and their families, ranging from large—Sunshine in Maumee, Ohio, serves 1,000 people each year—to small—Sunny Crest Home in Morgantown, Pa., serves 61 people.

MHS Alliance organizations provide services such as housing, vocational training, friendship and 24-hour support. These services make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live comfortable and meaningful lives, but there's also a role for the church to provide friendships and spiritual nurture. Congregations can be partners with local organizations to embrace the gifts of people with developmental and other disabilities. Two MHS Alliance organizations have a particular mission to help congregations do so.

Founded in 2000, Peaceful Living, Harleysville, Pa., describes its mission as "creating belonging for persons with disabilities within a faith community." Peaceful Living is working closely with seven congregations who have made a commitment to focus on being inclusive, encouraging environments where friendships are nurtured and everyone's gifts are identified and used.

Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet), Goshen, Ind., provides resources to congregations, families and people with disabilities. On the ADNet website (www.adnetonline.org), Sunday school teachers can find resources for teaching students with intellectual disabilities. ADNet is currently updating Supportive Care in the Congregation, a congregationally based care plan for people with disabilities. Originally published in 1984, the booklet remains one of ADNet's most sought-after resources, both by Mennonite congregations and those from other faith traditions.

Working together, MHS Alliance member organizations and congregations can embrace and celebrate the gifts of people who have developmental disabilities. TM

A year of surprises

My life this year is full of surprises. I have followed my spouse to a new location, adjusting to new circumstances and seeking to discern the ministry opportunities that unfold here. I didn't ask that a job solution be negotiated for me before Sara agreed to tackle her new role in leading a major institution of the church. My consistent and strong encouragement for her to take the invitation seriously was never contingent on what opportunities would emerge for me.

What has been surprising? I've been caught off-guard many times by the question, "So what will you do?" Doing, it turns out, counts for a lot in our culture, especially for males. With a quick reply, I claim this year as a "spouse-sponsored sabbatical." That usually evokes a grin of appreciation or a smirk tinged with envy.

Yet there are some things that wouldn't happen to a female in the more frequent reversal of the roles. At midafternoon I'm in an obscure aisle of a grocery store, and someone I don't know chuckles: "You're out doing the grocery shopping while your wife is over at the campus, running the seminary." And an older woman says: "It must take a pretty strong ego for a man to go such distances just to hear his wife preach."

I have chosen to keep Sara company where possible, appreciating opportunities to visit congregations and communities I have long heard about but not seen firsthand. So far, Alberta, Ontario, Kansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Ohio, Illinois and Florida have come freshly into view; more journeys lie ahead. And there is much to explore in our new geography—Indiana and nearby Michigan and Chicago.

After more than 30 years teaching in academia, I was ready for this kind of break. I am cultivating a nonanxious approach to the new and different possibilities that may emerge in my new context. But for those who need to know that I am productively engaged, the next comment is often most helpful: I'm teaching a college course as an adjunct professor, plus another course online with my previous seminary. With that, the picture seems to snap into place, and my profile is again secure.

This is not idle curiosity, for the most part. People need to know how things fit together, and the plight of a professional career disrupted by a spouse's major dislocation is not new, even for males. "I have a lot to learn in her new job," I am fond of pointing out.

Real families, it turns out, have seasons of switching roles and sharing burdens according to different formulas from what our predecessors maintained. My own experience is not unique, yet somehow it still seems unusual enough to evoke frequent inquiry. I appreciate the care and well-meant efforts to help discern the paths ahead. Like me, some retirees and caregivers in dramatically changed circumstances also need to recalculate their profile and direction in life. Some of these adjustments are to be expected; others are jolting and abrupt.

What comes clearer to me that I should probably be telling my hardworking colleagues is that stress levels in our society have been rising more than we generally recognize. Jobs are tight, hours are long, wages are flat and the pressure to produce and perform keeps rising.

Stepping back for a season of reflection, I am attending more to the birds in the backyard and the neighbors out front. I have been enjoying breakfast with the men from a nearby congregation who gather at a local cafe on Wednesday mornings. I shovel the snow, push the reel mower, build some furniture and delight in the squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, deer, hawks, geese, ducks, swans, herons, owls, woodpeckers, cardinals and juncos. I arrange for appliance repairs, sell a car and consult by phone when family members need someone to confide in. I have also resumed the quaint ancient practice of reading books (real books). I do a fairly good job on the grocery shopping and have come to count on hearing good sermons, too.

Today I took a stroll along the bay next to the Gulf of Mexico. I am reminded that our true calling, our vocation, starts long before the trek we make through the job market and lasts far beyond it as well. To find our true north, to will the one thing that God purposes for our lives, to fit into God's work in the world—that is our finest hope. And to support each other, our families and true-love partners in the new chapters as they unfold along the way—that is my joy. That is the framework that makes sense of our seasons of intense concerted work and also our finest stress-reducing sabbaticals. TM

Gerald Shenk resides in Goshen, Ind., and is teaching an online seminary course.

Jobs are tight, hours are long, wages are flat and the pressure to produce and perform keeps rising.

An exemplary discernment process

Rick Stiffney is president/CEO of Mennonite Health Services Alliance of Mennonite Church USA.

The recent decision by the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA concerning the 2013 Delegate Assembly meeting in Phoenix, Ariz., was an incredibly complex one. Regardless of the outcome, some stakeholders were not going to be satisfied or supportive. There was no simple, win-win option. That would have made the decision easy, not difficult. This decision may prove to be one of the most demanding that this particular board faces for some time. It was an honor to be a guest and observer as the board members wrestled with this sensitive and critical decision.

In my work with governing boards, I am often asked for case studies on how governing boards can effectively deal with difficult matters. I am keenly interested in the question of how our faith and sensitivity to spirituality shape the process of discernment and decision-making. The Executive Board's discernment process on this challenge had features that modeled sensitive and responsible spiritual discernment.

This decision may prove to be one of the most demanding that this particular board faces for some time.

My comments are not to be construed as a rationale for the outcome but as a witness to the integrity of the discernment process. I noted six important dynamics, each of which constituted faithful discernment. I only hope these would characterize how most face such critical and complex matters.

1. The board gathered critical input. The executive director and board solicited considerable input from many different stakeholder groups. Summary reports were prepared and distributed to the board in writing as part of the meeting preparation materials. The board invested nearly an hour in thoughtful review and in summarizing what board members thought they were hearing and should be learning from the feedback.

2. The board took adequate time. The board chair, executive committee and executive director recognized the significance of this decision and designed an agenda that provided ample time—in this case nearly five hours—to address the issue. The board engaged the issue with energy but not frenzy. Other items were compressed or delayed to create adequate time for discernment. This provided time for individuals to reflect, interact, pray, wait and sharpen their personal perspectives on a wide range of options.

3. The board prayed and reflected. At several points in the meeting, individual board members or the board chair asked that the conversation be suspended for a period of silence, reflection and prayer. The result was an awareness of the presence of God and a stance of listening for continuing direction from the Holy Spirit.

4. The board communicated in straightforward ways. The chair of the board invited board members to engage each other in loving but honest communication. Opinions and perspectives on the issue and options were far-ranging. On several occasions the chair focused a question and asked each board member to comment. Exchanges were civil but real. Feelings of aspiration, hope, hurt and struggle were all expressed. Board members wrestled with breadth of perspectives in the constituency. The conversation reflected the reality of diverse perspectives.

5. The board decided to move forward together. There was recognition that whatever the resulting decision, it was important for the board to stand together and move forward together. This did not require and did not mean that all board members agreed. Actually, there was searching discussion about whether this meant that all board members had to agree personally with the proposed resolution or that the emerging direction was their personal preferred outcome. Board members demonstrated great sensitivity to each other's personal stake and conscience. The board agreed that it would move forward together—trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of the church and God's grace.

6. The board anticipated response. The board wisely anticipated how the outcome would be perceived or received by many impacted by the result. The board gave prayerful and thoughtful consideration to what kind of communication could serve the church and build trust. This began with straightforward communication with other leaders from across the church who met in Tampa, Fla., just as the board was concluding its work.

I have seldom seen this quality of spiritual discernment. As a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and an executive with a set of ministries related to Mennonite Church USA, I am grateful for a churchwide board that practices such discerning leadership. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Convention 2011 goes green

Planners factor environmental impact into every decision

While some may miss the colorful flyers, magnets and other promotional materials found in the convention registration bags of the past, many may not even notice.

In seeking to be as "green" as possible, convention planners decided to eliminate the promotional materials from the registration bags at Mennonite Church USA Convention 2011 in Pittsburgh July 4-9.

"The sad reality is that many people throw the materials away," says Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. Or, at best, they may keep one or two items and toss the rest.

"From this point on, we are always asking the question of what's the greenest option," she says. "That wasn't really on our radar prior to Columbus [2009]. Now it is a part of every decision."

While the advertising in the bags helped the convention planning office cover expenses, Swartzendruber Miller says they are "willing to take a hit" as environmental concerns trump the bottom line for the planners.

Instead of the advertising materials, church agencies and colleges pay for ads that will loop as a slide show 10 minutes before adult and youth worship services.

The presentation should function similar to advertisements shown before the previews in a movie theater and will also include quiz questions from the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee—since this year is its centennial—as well as other trivia questions.

The most significant greening initiative is the Pittsburgh convention center space itself. The David L. Lawrence Center was the first LEED-certified convention center in the country.

The following are several of the many ways the convention reduces, reuses and recycles: the convention center supports the Buy Fresh, Buy Local food program in southwestern Pennsylvania, grows some of the food on its own roof, uses bulk water instead of thousands of water bottles, donates leftover food, composts waste food and manages its own on-site reclamation plant.

Regarding materials and promotional pieces for Pittsburgh 2011, convention planners tried to print as few as possible. Deidre Bias, convention communication coordinator, says they take using recycled materials into account as well as contracting with local companies in Goshen, Ind., for items like T-shirts and lanyards.

Convention planners decided to print 2,500 posters and 2,500 registration booklets and forms, but encourage participants to use the online registration, which opened on Jan. 25, instead of printing registration forms. The planners' goal for Phoenix 2013 is to offer registration only online, says Swartzendruber Miller.

"There's really only so much we can do," says Swartzendruber Miller. It's up to the participant to opt out of room service in the hotels or make environmentally-conscious travel plans. Swartzendruber Miller says the convention planners advocate for participants to carpool or take the train.

Representatives from Mennonite Creation Care Network contacted the convention planners initially, and then the planners asked them for suggestions and for lists of ways for youth groups and adults to make green choices.

Other greening measures include the decision not to print songbooks this year (as was the case in Columbus 2009), and Mennonite Church USA will not have a staff display.

—Anna Groff

Green ideas for those attending the Pittsburgh 2011 convention:

Get the meal plan. The convention center's food service is one of the greenest options Mennonite Church USA conventions have ever had—in terms of the food, the dinnerware used and how waste is managed.

Bring along reusable water bottles and travel mugs instead of disposable ones.

Carpool or take the train or bus to Pittsburgh. If you live close, consider biking.

If you make T-shirts for your group, choose organic cotton T-shirts.

Take along your own cloth napkins to reuse.

Remember to recycle and compost.

Participate in a Servant Project that gets you outside and caring for creation. Notice the landscape along the way and try to name the bodies of water at every bridge.

Hang up and reuse towels and sheets in hotels to reduce water and energy consumption.

Walk or use public transit to travel within Pittsburgh.

For these ideas and more, go to http://www.mennocreationcare.org/PittsCenterHighlights.php.

The Corinthian Plan's first year is a success

Director sees high commitment to the plan, low premium increases for 2011.

The Corinthian Plan's first year proved to be successful, according to Keith Harder, director of The Corinthian Plan. The Corinthian Plan is Mennonite Church USA's new heath-care access plan for pastors and other congregational employees that began Jan. 1, 2010.

First, 99 percent of churches that enrolled in the plan in 2010 renewed for 2011.

"The really good news is that now that we've completed the first year, we have the same number of congregations we started the year with," said Harder on Jan. 25. "That represents a very strong commitment to the plan."

Second, Harder said he also felt positive that the claims made against the plan were less than the amount of premiums collected.

"We feel that financial performance of the plan has been very good," he said. "This helped keep premium increases for 2011 lower than many insurance plans and helped us build our reserves."

While the individual church situations vary, the overall premium increase, on average, falls under 10 percent—below the national average, according to Harder. Anecdotally, Harder said he has heard increases as high as 40 percent.

"We feel confident that the increases in premium rates were less than what most people experienced," he said.

Third, the plan also made a difference for congregations without any health coverage. Last year, 56 churches received financial assistance with the premium through The Corinthian Plan, and this year 55 will receive assistance.

> We feel that financial performance of the plan has been very good.—Keith Harder

"I'd like congregations to know that their contributions as part of their premiums is helping others," Harder said.

However, Harder said, he acknowledges and struggles with the fact that the high deductible remains a challenge for many congregations.

While the plan provides a safety net, unfortunately pastors with high medical costs do not see tangible benefits until their costs reach the deductible.

Harder said he felt encouraged when he saw other churches step in to offer financial support for a church with high medical costs. However, he added, "it remains a big challenge. I don't want to understate that."

Looking into 2011, Harder hopes to promote and increase participation in the wellness initiatives. The optional initiative provides cash benefit to those who complete a wellness assessment (which gives specific individualized recommendations to improve health and reduce risks) and to set and achieve wellness goals. While the original plan included the feature, only about 15 percent of those eligible accessed the benefit in 2010.

While the participation goal of 70 percent of all Mennonite Church USA congregations has not yet been met, The Corinthian Plan project team agreed that there is sufficient participation for a plan with a solid financial foundation.

Harder said the plan started with 451 participating congregations, which is about half the total of Mennonite Church USA congregations.

"The more critical number was the percentage of eligible [congregations]," Harder said. "Four-hundred and fifty-one represents about 70 percent of those congregations that have eligible employees."

The Corinthian Plan board continues to monitor the potential impact of the health reform legislation, but it remains too soon to know how it will affect the plan.—*Anna Groff*

"EMU's international awareness, coupled with its diverse student body, has really helped me to feel at home here. I've been encouraged to further develop my cultural perceptions."

-Christopher Stauffer
sophomore
digital media major

Chris grew up in South Africa as a "missionary kid."

Many "third culture kids" find a fit at EMU. Find out more: emu.edu/thirdculture

Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, Va. • admiss@emu.edu

Whigham to lead Franconia Conference

Succeeds Santiago, who will stay on as minister for spiritual transformation.

On Feb. 4, John Goshow, moderator of Franconia Mennonite Conference, announced that Ertell M. Whigham Jr. has accepted the position of executive minister of the conference for an initial two-year period, effective Feb. 3.

Whigham succeeds Noel Santiago, who has served in various ministries with Franconia Conference the past 14 years, most recently as executive minister.

The conference board and its executive committee met frequently over the past several months to discern the leadership needed to help Franconia Conference achieve its mission, which is to equip leaders to empower others to embrace God's mission. The review process included consultation with current leadership, Mennonite Church USA and resources outside the church.

"Ertell brings a strong background in church leadership, vision cultivation and collaborative management to Franconia Conference," said Goshow. "Ertell did not ask for this role, but through prayerful discernment, much discussion and listening by the conference board, we came to the decision that his gifts and skills meet the needs of Franconia Conference at this time."

Whigham has been a member of conference staff since 2000. He was born and raised in north Philadelphia and attended the Center for Urban Theological Studies, where he majored in human resource management. He served on the pastoral teams of Diamond Street Church of Philadelphia and Bethel Mennonite Church of Norristown, Pa. In 1990, he helped establish Nueva Vida Norristown New Life, where he is an associate pastor. He and Patricia, his wife, have three children and five grandchildren.

Santiago will remain as a staff member for the conference and has accepted a position as LEADership minister for spiritual transformation. Gay Brunt Miller will assume the role of director of administration. Her LEADership minister responsibilities will be transferred to other conference staff. Brunt Miller worked with similar responsibilities previously in Franconia Conference.

The roles for both Santiago and Brunt Miller are effective immediately. Other staff positions remain unchanged at this time, though some continued realignment is projected in the work of LEADership ministers as responsibilities and workloads are adjusted.—*from releases by Franconia Mennonite Conference*

Jenni, helping out at the food bank
Biblical Commitment
Anabaptist Action
ROSEDALE
BIBLE COLLEGE
www.rosedale.edu

CMU
CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The Board of Governors of Canadian Mennonite University invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective July 1, 2012.

CMU is an Anabaptist Christian university located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was chartered by the Province of Manitoba in 1998, and received membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada in 2008.

The President will lead CMU in accordance with its mission, vision and core commitments that are based on Biblical principles and rooted in Anabaptist-Mennonite and Evangelical perspectives, and will oversee all aspects of CMU including academic, student life, enrolment and marketing, administration and finance, development, strategic planning, and external relationships.

A full position profile and other details can be found at
http:/www.cmu.ca/presidential_search.html
Nominations or expressions of interest should be addressed to:
Ron Loeppky - Chair, Presidential Search Committee
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2 CANADA
Or sent by email to: **presidentialsearch@cmu.ca**

Young leaders launch new network

Anabaptist Missional Project attracts young Mennonite leaders and students.

Several seminary students, including Matthew Krabill and David Stutzman, longed for a network of young adult Mennonites passionate about the church. Krabill and Stutzman, two young adult Mennonites, study at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.

"We're exploring what it means to do church and be Mennonite in our context," says Stutzman, 32. "We want to be in conversation with others across the country."

These desires culminated in the newly formed Anabaptist Mission Project. AMP members had their first official meetings in 2009 and 2010 and will gather again at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., shortly before Mennonite Church USA's Pittsburgh 2011 convention. They will also present a seminar at the convention.

Anabaptist Missional Project's vision statement reads, "a network of young Anabaptist Christian leaders who love Jesus, care about the church and seek to be part of God's mission in the world."

Stutzman and Rebekka, his wife, serve in youth ministry at Maranatha Christian Fellowship in Northridge, Calif. Krabill works as administrator for Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference. At this point, AMP attracts primarily young adult Mennonites who hold some kind of church leadership position or attend a Mennonite institution.

Constructive, not critical: Another AMP participant, Sherah-Leigh Gerber, says AMP hopes to work within the existing church structures, contribute young adult voices to the church and be partners with leaders.

"The goal from the beginning was to be a constructive voice, not a critical voice," says Gerber, 27, and resource team coordinator for Ohio Mennonite Conference.

The group identified tensions within Mennonite Church USA, says Krabill. For example, the political polarization of the church and many of the different streams we drink from that shape who we are as the body of Christ come from either broader society or conservative Christian voices—neither of which are rooted in historic Anabaptism or Scripture.

He also named a separation between the "mission conversations" and the "peace and justice conversations" in the church. Among young adults, Krabill says, he sees confusion over identity and what it means to be Mennonite beyond its cultural connotations.

"[Being Mennonite] means so many different things to different people," Krabill says. "It's become a catchall phrase."

Stutzman describes these concerns as a "shared catalyst" for people committed to the church in their local context. AMP offers a "community of passion" where people can share ideas and concerns, he says.

Encouraging churches: Gerber says AMP leaders feel discouraged when hearing about the lack of young adult involvement in Mennonite Church USA. So during the group's meetings, individuals share their faith stories, and AMP leaders maintain a running list of the recurring themes. Some examples: the presence of mentors, cross-cultural experiences, personalizing one's faith, affirmation in the church and opportunities to experiment with church leadership roles. AMP leaders plan to share these themes with congregations curious about cultivating young adult involvement.

AMP hosted several meetings so far: November 2009 in Harrisonburg, Va., November 2010 in Lancaster, Pa., and May 2010 in Elkhart, Ind., with about 20 individuals present at each. At the meetings, AMP invited seasoned church leaders to share their experiences and reflect on AMP's goals.

At one meeting, Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, described the similarities and differences he observes between AMP and the young adult Mennonite groups when he was a young adult. He named the connection of mission with spiritual formation and disciplines as one similarity between then and now.

"It was interesting to see that the church has dealt with this before," says Jeremy Shue, 29, a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, and minister of outreach at Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

Images of leadership: AMP also discusses the transfer of church leadership from the current leaders to the younger generation. AMP leaders prefer the image of "yoking together" or partnering rather than "passing the torch," Gerber says.

The group also wants to foster young adult-to-young adult relationships through their current leadership positions.

"We're going be working together for a long time," says Krabill. "I hope [AMP] contributes to establishing relationships and a common identity across the church."

At the November 2010 meeting in Lancaster, AMP invited David Miller, professor at AMBS, to join them. After observing the group discuss contentious issues, Miller told Shue he was struck with how the group listened to one another and tried to understand the individuals' contexts.

"It was a model of listening that he had not necessarily witnessed before," Shue says. "Part of caring for the church is caring for each other."

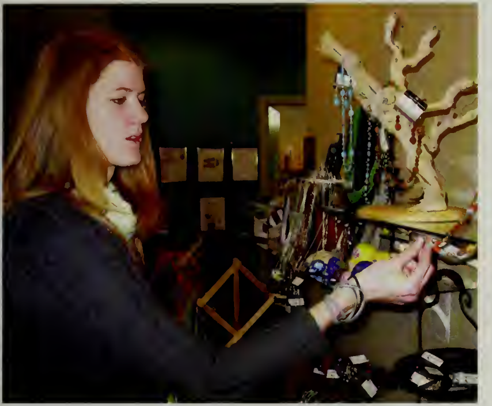
For more information on AMP and their meetings, e-mail anabaptistmissionalproject@gmail.com.—*Anna Groff*

Correction: In the box on page 47 (February) Canadian Women in Mission should read Mennonite Women Canada.

German young adults serve in the United States

Seven volunteer with Mennonite Mission Network programs this year.

Photo provided



Service Adventure participant Melanie Kahlen works at her service placement, Women E.A.R.N. in Albuquerque, N.M.

When Viktor Epp walks into a house to fix something, he never knows what he'll find. The 20-year-old German volunteer with Interfaith Housing Services, a Hutchinson, Kan., organization that provides homes for low-income and disabled people, is often sent on calls to take care of repair issues.

The day he met a 60-year-old couple, however, the situation struck him in a new way. The woman's legs and her right arm had been amputated as a result of diabetes.

"That was an eye-opener for me that this is what my service is about," Epp says, "that we help these people and it's not just work. People need these houses, and they can get them. I couldn't tell you where they'd live if they hadn't gotten this house."

Epp, an MVSer, is one of seven German young adults who are currently serving with Mission Network programs. Four are placed through Mennonite Voluntary Service and three through Service Adventure. Both are volunteer programs for young adults. The German participants come through a partner agency in Germany called Christliche Dienste.

"CD places them where they feel they will fit best," says Tonia Martin, a personnel counselor with Mission Network's Christian Service programs. "Many of the men are looking to satisfy their alternative to military service requirement for the German government, but both the men and women are also looking for a way to serve God."

After 16 years of schooling, Annika Büchner says she was ready to do something different.

"It has always been my dream to spend one year abroad in service," she says. "I just needed a break from school and I decided I could do a year for God."

Büchner was placed in the Fresno, Calif., Mennonite Voluntary Service unit, where she works for United Cerebral Palsy in a school for disabled adults. For the first few months she served as a one-on-one caregiver, then she became an instructor, teaching 10 classes a week—everything from art to cooking to dance.

"Most of the students are very disabled," she says, "so it's more about making the day fun for them, to entertain them or show them something."

Büchner chose to come to the United States because she studied English for 10 years and doesn't consider herself very good with new languages. "I wanted to serve in a country where people speak English," she says.

Melanie Kahlen, 19, also wanted to live abroad while serving God. "I always wanted to do a year of service or a year of helping people," she says. "I wanted to do it in another country, and since I'm not into French, I knew it would have to be an English-speaking country."

Kahlen joined Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M., where she splits her time between First Nations Community HealthSource, a nonprofit health and human services organization, and Women E.A.R.N., an agency that helps immigrants and Native American artisans create their own businesses.

At Women E.A.R.N, Kahlen works as a receptionist, organizer, general office helper and cashier, while at First Nations, she mentors a group of five students, helping with homework and doing activities like roller skating and soccer.

"A lot of the kids' parents are incarcerated, or they live with their grandparents, or they don't really have a lot of role models in their lives," Kahlen says. "I love my work."

Büchner, who already has a bachelor's degree in nutritional medicine, plans to go back to school for a doctorate and then work in a lab, doing research and potentially working with cancer patients.

Epp and Kahlen have less concrete plans—Viktor hopes to teach apprentices how to do tool and dye making, while Melanie intends to go to university in Germany and then possibly work in a nonprofit organization.

"[Working with a nonprofit] is really what I feel like I should do somehow, not just work in a business or something," she says. "I definitely had that idea before I came here, but it's more developed now. I would say it's so satisfying to do that work."—*Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network*

Pastors' weeks focus on Holy Spirit, preaching

Cheryl Bridges Johns visits EMS, Cleophus LaRue visits AMBS in January.

Lindsey Kolb

Plenary speaker Cheryl Bridges Johns addresses the participants at School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mary E. Klassen

Cleophus LaRue encourages participants at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Pastors' Week to use their imaginations as they prepare sermons.

Where is the Holy Spirit working today? The nearly 200 people attending the annual School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 17-19, heard Cheryl Bridges Johns explore the theme "The Work of the Holy Spirit: Pentecost Remixed."

Johns, a member of the Wesleyan-Pentecostal faith and professor from Cleveland, Ky., spoke about the ongoing work of the Spirit in the world today. "The work of the Holy Spirit has been overlooked in many Christian circles," said Johns, "or, as in my denomination, it has been pigeon-holed into one or two areas."

Johns encouraged the participants to think about the feast of Pentecost described in Acts 2 as a continuing and not a one-time event. It occasionally happens in Pentecostal churches today, but, Johns said, "the Holy Spirit doesn't have to interrupt because it is working daily in the world."

Johns also suggested why Christians sometimes resist the Holy Spirit. "Pentecost is a festival of deconstruction," she said. "We don't like to lose our individuality and our ability for control. As in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit causes us to lose control.

Part of this loss of control, according to Johns, has to do with speaking in tongues. "Language is the last hiding place of the self," she said. "When I give away my language I am exposed." However, she continued, speaking in tongues is also a "redistribution of knowledge."

On Jan. 19, seminary dean Michael A. King preached on the topic "Toward Becoming more Daring in the Spirit." King described how a mentor encouraged him to live without a map, when he was in the midst of a midlife crisis in his 40s. "Living without a map is a way of describing a life guided by the Holy Spirit," he said.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Cleophus LaRue, Ph.D., encouraged the 200 participants in Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 24–27, to preach because they "have something to say" rather than because they "have to say something." Using the theme "Preaching with imagination and creativity in the postmodern era," the Princeton Theological Seminary professor demonstrated imaginative preaching while he also explored ways to develop sermons with integrity and relevance. LaRue described a trend in many churches to enhance the other elements of the worship service at the expense of the sermon.

LaRue first described phases of sermon preparation that invite the imagination into the process. The second phase is informed imagination, in which the preacher explores commentaries and devotional materials based on the text. These check the imaginative ideas to make sure they are valid while continuing to let the preacher "hear the faint giggle of play" with the text. The third phase is enhanced imagination. Ideas don't stop coming once the sermon has been preached, LaRue said.—*Mary E. Klassen of AMBS*

Conversation Room needs healthy dialogue

Mennonite Church USA leaders invite suggestions for room at Pittsburgh 2011.

Mennonite Church USA leaders invite topic suggestions for the Prayer and Conversation Room at Pittsburgh 2011 July 4-9.

Skilled, experienced facilitators will lead the conversations. Mennonite Church USA staff members are helping to schedule the room's conversation topics.

"We're trying to create a space where people can thoughtfully and prayerfully speak about what's on their hearts and listen well to others," says André Gingerich Stoner, director of holistic witness and interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA.

Leaders will assign topics to some of the 90- to 120-minute blocks of time and post them in the program book or in mPress, the convention daily newspaper. Some time periods may be open-ended, and the participants involved would decide what to discuss.

The room will be located near the large space used for delegate sessions and adult worship and has been created in response to suggestions from delegates at previous conventions.

Stoner acknowledges the limitations of a 90-minute conversation among people without previous relationships, but he says it offers a space to practice healthy dialogue.

"The goal is for people with different perspectives in the church to be together in a way where we really listen to each other," Stoner says.

"This is part of a longer process," he says, adding that he hopes participants carry on these practices into their church and conference settings. "This is part of what it means to be a discerning community of faith."

Stoner poses the question to readers: "What are topics about which you would like to listen and speak carefully with others that relate to the life and witness of our church?"

Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, wrote in his Communiqué in the November 2010 issue of *The Mennonite:* "We invite individuals or groups in that room to engage in specific conversations about the resolutions and statements that Mennonite Church USA has adopted over the years, such as those dealing with health care, immigration, sexuality and human trafficking."

To suggest a topic, post a comment on our website, www.themennonite.org, or on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/themennonite, or e-mail Stoner at andregs@mennoniteusa.org.—*Anna Groff*

Recipe for disaster:
1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS
Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Award Winning
TWO-CYLINDER® MAGAZINE

The Finest Publication Covering Vintage John Deere Tractors & Equipment

Membership in the Two-Cylinder Club® includes the bi-monthly magazine (each issue contains a quality product and service section, along with member-submitted Classified Ads); convenient no-charge access to our team of technical experts; discounts on books, DVDs, and other products; and the opportunity to obtain exclusive services such as Tractor Build Records.

We invite members of the Mennonite Community to join the many thousands of people from around the globe who are already members of the Two-Cylinder Club. Please visit **www.two-cylinder.com** for more information.

Membership is $34.95 per year.

Two-Cylinder • PO Box 430 • Grundy Center, IA 50638
Personal checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, and PayPal

Institutions are returning to the church

Historically, Mennonites have been anti-institutional. Yet today we have many institutions—possibly more per capita than any other denomination in North America. How shall we explain this? Are we simply confused? Or is institutional development an inevitable implication of maturity and mission?

This was the first paragraph of the lead article in the Sept 13, 1994, edition of *Gospel Herald* by J. Lawrence Burkholder, then president emeritus of Goshen, Ind.) College. We are what in German is called "a family rich with children." The congregations and agencies are listed in a 300-page Mennonite Church USA Directory (see box).

Some are small, while others are relatively large, with a national or even international reputation. This includes such fields as financial/stewardship services (Everence), relief and development (Mennonite Central Committee, or MCC), development (Mennonite Economic Development Associates, or MEDA) and disaster (Mennonite Disaster Service). Our colleges and universities are well rated by such outside organizations as *US News and World Report*. Collectively these organizations and agencies have thousands of employees. Their annual cash flow is in the hundreds of millions of dollars and their assets are well into the billions of dollars.

Most have their origin in some branch of the Mennonite faith community. Some continue to maintain an organic tie to some official church body and are under its official control.

Others operate more independently, although there may be bylaw provisions for a church body to appoint members to the board of directors. Most qualify for 501(c)(3) status and the Canadian equivalent. Some serve only Mennonites, while others serve the general public. Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Schools, for example, served Mennonites exclusively at its founding. But in 2010, less than 40 percent of its 1,500 students on three campuses came from Mennonite churches. Whether serving the public or Mennonites only, this impressive array of agencies and institutions enriches the life of the church and is a part of its mission outreach.

Yet, as Burkholder suggests, the Mennonite church has been ambivalent about institutions—maybe less so now than a generation ago and more so in some parts of the church than in others. Still there is a perceivable distance. From the institutional side, as they mature, some have exercised the independence accorded them under their legal charter. Some have felt limited by constraints imposed by the church. Some have felt constrained to go beyond the borders of the Mennonite church to achieve the volume to operate efficiently and for financial support.

Sometimes the church has allowed this distancing to happen, maybe even taking satisfaction in seeing the services it initiated serve a broader community, while others have come to feel estranged and used.

The church has contributed to this estrangement when it has occurred. It has set high expectations without always providing the moral and financial support needed to succeed. This was most pronounced in the 1980s, when numerous church agencies put, as it were, a firewall between themselves and their agencies and institutions to escape what was then called ascending liability.

Happily, there are some signs that this trend is being reversed. Some agencies and institutions that strayed from their church parentage are once again cultivating this relationship. Brook Lane in Maryland serves as a good illustration: It was the first mental hospital established by MCC and became part of the Mennonite Mental Health Service. Over the years with staff and board member turnover, it became distant from its church roots. Under new leadership it has reconnected and now values its church history again.

Many are revisiting their sense of identity and connecting in a fresh and meaningful way with the faith community through MHS Alliance, giving them a formal if also a limited tie to Mennonite Church USA. Several area conferences have created a category of membership for conference-related ministries. Conferences are coming to see that their work consists not only of congregations but includes these agencies of the church.

Responding to Burkholder, I say, No, the church is not confused. While there are dangers to be avoided, functional agencies and institutions are serving as the arms and legs of the church and helping it fulfill its Christian calling. Agencies

Agencies and institutions listed in the Mennonite Church USA Directory

20 mission agencies
40 historical associations
46 retirement homes
33 elementary and secondary schools members of Mennonite Schools Council
29 child-care centers, 26 Kindergartens, plus numerous after-school care centers
53 camps
five universities/colleges, two seminaries
15 disability and health-care providers
one hospital

Read **Setting the Agenda: Meditations for the Organization's Soul** by Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney (Herald Press, 2011, $15.99), which offers practical advice on how to govern an organization from a spiritual vantage point.

and institutions are discovering that they need the church to serve as an anchor for their Christian value-based mission. The church and its agencies compliment and need each other.

Institutions coming to an end: After scanning the record of Mennonite institutions, John Roth states in an article published in *The Mennonite* (Feb. 4, 2003), "On the basis of recent history, one could argue that the experiment in denominationwide institutions begun in the late 19th century is coming to an end."

A new generation is evaluating the institutions it is inheriting. Some of our most prominent organizations are evaluating not only their programs but also their governance structures. Not all will survive this scrutiny or perhaps even deserve to survive. The past should be honored. But finally, as is said in the world of athletics, "You are only as good as your next play."

Reminding ourselves that all systems are only ever one generation away from extinction, the immediate challenge facing the Mennonite institutional community is in defining and organizing itself in ways that will win the loyalty and support of a new generation. The generation under 40 years of age has other values and expectations of the organizations it supports. Many of the causes their parents supported appear stodgy to them. Sometimes this support is shown in different ways. Contributions to the annual fund, for example, may decrease, but contributions to church matching grants may increase.

Mennonites no longer live on a virtual island, isolated from external influence. Mennonite institutions need to make their case for support in a competitive environment. They are surrounded by other agencies, some doing good work and making their case convincingly. A special challenge is to reorient these historic structures to be owned and supported also by the racial diversity of the larger Mennonite church.

Mennonite organizations with a future will give careful attention to the following:

1. Clarity of mission: What is an institution's reason for being? What are the deepest-held values that shape its leaders' decisions? At the same time, what is its field of competence? What does it know and what can it do? Organizations always exist to address need, but need takes new and different forms. Organizations must therefore change to remain relevant. In making that change there is always the danger of what some call "mission drift." Good organizational planning begins with clarity of mission.

2. Clarity of message and motive: Church-based organizations are at the nexus where the church and the world intersect. Faith-based institutions have feet in both worlds. They need to be relevant to the need that surrounds them. At the same time they need to represent and present appropriately the message of the gospel that is their driving spirit. Either to the exclusion of the other is incomplete.

3. Appropriate use of power and authority: Many members of church-related agency boards are in their other life active in a wide variety of secular organizations. This can be enriching but also deceptively distracting. Filters are needed to insure that values such as servanthood leadership, as taught by Jesus in Matthew 20:26, are practiced. Constitutional provisions are needed to prevent leaders from becoming disoriented from their theological and historical roots.

4. Make room for God's Spirit: Boards of so-called faith-based organizations need to give more attention to the faith dimension. Most Mennonite boards conduct their meetings with some semblance of Robert's Rules of Order. Books like *Doing Good Even Better* suggesting techniques for more effective organizational governance have been read widely. Some are adopting the Carver model of policy governance. These are all important. But lacking in many organizations is a conscious recognition of the spiritual dimension in the boardroom. A good spirit can compensate for bad technique. But nothing, not even the best technique, can compensate for a bad spirit or replace what a conscious sense of God's leading can provide.

> The upward look [is] where we acknowledge that we are God's servants, trying earnestly to know and do God's will in a spirit of humility.—Rick Stiffney and Edgar Stoesz

If Mennonite organizations are going to survive the challenges that face them they will need to get beyond human ingenuity and draw on the Spirit to guide and undergird them. They need to recognize consciously what is stated so beautifully in the hymn "The Work Is Thine, Oh Christ Our Lord." These organizations and the church have much to gain by working in a mutually complementary relationship.

Rick Stiffney and I said it this way in *Setting the Agenda: Meditations for the Organization's Soul*: "There is the inward look that has us looking at ourselves and identifying our gifts and resources. There is the outward look that reminds us of the needs and challenges that surround us. Finally, there is the upward look, where we acknowledge that we are God's servants, trying earnestly to know and do God's will in a spirit of humility."—*Edgar Stoesz lives in Akron, Pa., where he retired after 44 years with Mennonite Central Committee. Stoesz has served on numerous boards and chaired the boards of Habitat for Humanity International, the American Leprosy Missions and Heifer Project.*

Excel Industries gives $500,000 to Hesston College

Gift reflects longstanding relationship between Mullets, Hesston and Excel.

Photo provided

Paul (left) and Bob Mullet in the Excel Industries plant in Hesston

Brothers Bob and Paul Mullet remember well the station wagon that brought their family to Hesston, Kan., in 1958. Their parents, Roy and Bess Mullet, were moving the family from a farm in Montana to Kansas. Roy figured he and Bess could solve the problem of the kids commuting 25 miles to school by buying a place in Hesston where the sons could be close to family and educational opportunities. With Roy's death on Jan. 14, many at the college and in the community are reflecting on Roy's legacy.

The family's most significant influence has come by way of Excel Industries, manufacturer of industrial and residential lawnmowers located in Hesston. In addition to being one of the largest employers in Harvey County, Excel has established a charitable foundation that allows the company to give roughly 10 percent of its profits each year to philanthropic efforts—most of which are focused in the local community.

Excel made the lead gift of $500,000 for the Erb Hall Renovation Project, and it's a gift that reflects the longstanding relationship between the Mullet family, Hesston College and Excel Industries. The connection goes beyond all five of Roy and Bess's sons attending either the academy or the college. The college played a role in getting Roy connected with the company back in 1960.

After working at the local turkey plant and Hesston Corporation, among other places, Roy decided to enroll in classes at Hesston College. It had been 20 years since he graduated high school. Roy was quite senior to many of his classmates and only two years ahead of his oldest son, Dave, but still he persisted and took his coursework seriously.

One of Roy's instructors, Cal Redekop, was working with a local group of men who were establishing what would become Excel. Cal was impressed by Roy, and the two became more like friends than professor and student, Bob says.

"It was through that connection with Cal that Dad got involved at Excel," says Bob, now vice president at Excel. "We still run the company with the same philosophy Dad and Cal established in the beginning."

With the start of the campaign to raise funds for the renovation of dorm rooms and lounges in Erb Hall, Hesston College President Howard Keim and Vice President for Advancement Yvonne Sieber contacted Excel's foundation about making a gift.

"The timing was right," says Paul, President and CEO at Excel. "We had a buildup of funds that we wanted to give and use for something that really needed to get done."

"The need really struck a chord with me," Bob says. "This is more my personal philosophy, but Hesston College has a unique product in the opportunities it provides for first-year students to be involved in a plethora of activities, and our father always had a philosophy of wanting to support the college."—*Marathana Prothro of Hesston College*

Mennonite Mission Network
The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

MENNONITE MISSION NETWORK is inviting applications for **Executive Director of Nazareth Village,** Nazareth, Israel.

Nazareth Village (www.nazarethvillage.com) is an international ministry partner with Mennonite Mission Network, and is requesting applications immediately for a key leadership position.

The Executive Director will provide primary leadership for Nazareth Village, a re-creation of a first-century Jewish village, located in Jesus' hometown. Qualified applicants will be committed Christians active in a congregation, have experience in combining faith and business, and have a background in organizational structure, operations, capital projects oversight, and personnel and financial management. The successful candidate should have international life experience and sensitivity to Middle East cultural and religious dynamics.

Nazareth Village welcomes inquiries from applicants who have interest in a 12- to 15-month position as a transitional Executive Director, to help move the Village from an independent organization to functioning under the umbrella of another not-for-profit organization.

Actual employment will be through Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. For further information, contact Ruth L. Guengerich, international personnel counselor, at **RuthG@MMNworld.net**, or call **866-866-2872, ext. 23062**.

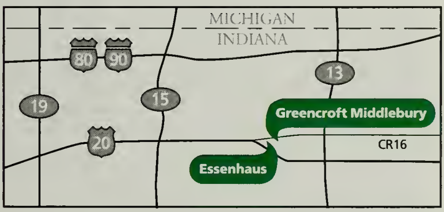
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
20
CR16
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

Five churches build five houses

Mennonite Disaster Service program is key to 'long-term survival' in Louisiana.

Five Hartville, Ohio, Mennonite churches are nearly finished building five houses with Mennonite Disaster Service. The houses are part of MDS's Partnership Home Program (PHP) and are being completed in the west end of New Iberia, La.

On Jan. 4, teams from the churches were in New Iberia at the home sites prepping for the build, including pouring the pads and getting things ready for initial inspections. Actual building of the houses started on Jan. 24. By afternoon of the same day, all the houses had been framed, with one of them having the trusses in place.

By the end of the week, one member of the building teams wrote, "One of the homes was [structurally] completed, with another to be completed by noon tomorrow, and there is a good chance that the other homes will be completed except for the roofs."

More than 55 people from Bethany Mennonite, Cornerstone Mennonite, Hartville Mennonite, Maple Grove Mennonite and Pleasant View Mennonite churches were part of this build-and-framing blitz. Some had volunteered with MDS earlier, including at least two previous PHP projects.

Partnering with these churches and MDS is Southern Mutual Help Association (SMHA) and Louisiana Housing Finance Agency—both of whom have a history of cooperation working in communities in need in Louisiana.

Marva Mimms Porter, small-town mayor and initiative housing coordinator for SMHA, said, "Not a day goes past that I don't think about what this relationship with MDS does for the community of people who have experienced deep inequities and are entrenched in bitterness."

Joseph Lockwood, president of Hopkins Street Economic Development District, said, "What the Mennonites are doing here is key to the long-term survival of the community." These and the other three MDS project locations in New Iberia "help people who otherwise could not own a home."

Church groups can travel to a site and construct a house or houses over the course of several weeks. Another option is to build houses at various locations, such as warehouses, universities, churches, parking lots and gyms.

After construction, the houses are taken apart in sections, placed on trucks and shipped to the homeowners' sites. Some of the same volunteers then reassemble the sections and complete the remaining construction of each house.
—*Scott Sundberg of MDS*

RESOURCES

Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught About God's Wrath and Judgment by Sharon L. Baker (Westminster John Knox, 2010, $17) explores traditional views of hell and how they have damaged our understanding of a loving God. Baker considers the origins of the notion of sinners and nonbelievers cast into an eternity of unquenchable flames and candidly outlines the problems and inconsistencies these views present.

Changing Human Nature: Ecology, Ethics, Genes and God by James C. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2010, $18) draws from the biblical tradition to argue that human beings have a unique capacity and calling to tend and develop the natural world—including themselves, their bodies and their genes—as God's garden.

The Singing Junk-Man: Stories of Faith and Hope and Humor by Truman H. Brunk (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $14.95) reports common people doing uncommon things, offering proof that "God doesn't make junk."

European Mennonite Voluntary Service: Youth Idealism in Post-World War II Europe by Calvin Wall Redekop (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $14.95) tells the story of the Mennonite-related work camp movement and its effort to organize volunteers to help reconstruct Europe after World War II. It includes analysis, extended personal accounts, photos, notes and an index.

Face to Face: A Poetry Collection by Julie Cadwallader-Staub (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $12.95) presents poems that describe a journey through the darkness of death and into the light of healing. Some of the poems appeared in *The Mennonite.*

A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity by Dawn Ruth Nelson (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $18.95) tells the story of 20th-century Mennonite agrarian spirituality through the lens of one woman's life and one seminary (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary).

At Powerline and Diamond Hill: Unexpected Intersections of Life and Work by Lee Snyder (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $14.95) tells how a Mennonite farm girl, whose "closed" Oregon community prescribed a limited role for women and distrusted education, became a university president.

An American in Persia: A Pilgrimage to Iran by Richard A. Kauffman (Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, $12.95) tells stories of his encounters with Iranians, their culture and their politics to give witness to ways walls can break down when the stories, culture and history of others are attended to.

Carolyn Heggen new Sister Care co-facilitator

Women leaders hope to translate, contextualize materials for other cultures.

Carolyn Holderread Heggen, psychotherapist specializing in women's issues, trauma recovery and healing, has accepted a role as co-facilitator of Mennonite Women USA's (MW USA) Sister Care.

During the past year she provided leadership in the revision and expansion of the manual and seminar, collaborating with Rhoda Keener and Ruth Lapp Guengerich.

"Sister Care brings together the best of our theology and psychological understandings in practical ways that are accessible for lay women," Heggen says. "It provides training women can use for their own healing and as they reach out to help others."

Heggen and Keener, MW USA executive director, co-presented the Sister Care seminar in Franklin Conference Feb. 4-5 at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa. About 80 women attended from six Mennonite Church USA conferences as well as six local denominations, including Presbyterian, Brethren in Christ, United Brethren, Catholic and Baptist churches.

During the five-year development and testing stage of Sister Care, seminars were held in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Colorado, Ohio, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Iowa—each hosted by local Mennonite Women leaders.

"Providing a resource to equip lay women has been a central goal for Mennonite Women USA," Keener says.

At the heart of the seminar is work women are invited to do with their own story as they identify places where God's grace and healing have transformed loss and grief.

"What touched me was how accessible the concepts were made for ordinary women," says participant Freda Neil. "The seminar validated what I have experienced in ministry—that my story of brokenness and God's transformation can help others."

"The most helpful part of the teaching for me was learning how it is possible to help others change their 'toxic' stories to healing stories," Neil adds. "As we listen, we can ask questions that encourage others to see God's presence in their journeys. At the closing anointing service, I asked to have my ears and my heart anointed so that I can listen from my heart. Compassionate listening is truly spiritual work."

Keener is delighted that Heggen will be a primary co-presenter of Sister Care for the next two years.

"Heggen brings decades of commitment to the church working with women's issues as well as a strong academic and clinical background," Keener says. "Her teaching and care for women's healing and wholeness are a great gift."

Heggen has lived and worked in Latin America, Pakistan and Nepal and has traveled extensively, speaking and doing workshops.

While serving with Mennonite Central Committee, she was head of pastoral care and counseling for the ecumenical United Mission to Nepal. Since then she has provided trauma counseling training for local people to do community trauma healing work following the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia and other areas of disaster.

Heggen is the author of *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*, which has also been translated into Spanish. She has offered workshops on family violence and healing throughout Canada, the United States, Latin America and in other countries.

"One of the things I find very satisfying is that I continue to be able to mentor and support women around the world," Heggen says. "These relationships are already bringing requests to share Sister Care resources and training internationally."

Keener and Heggen envision inviting women from other cultures to contextualize the material and make it appropriate for use in their setting.

Sister Care seminars are being scheduled for 2011 and 2012. This fall, seminars will be offered in Illinois, South Dakota, Florida and Kansas, with others in process.

Plans are underway to have the manual translated and contextualized for use among Hispanic women. Attending the Franklin seminar in February were Wanda Gonzalez Coleman, who will provide the translation work, and Elizabeth Soto Albrecht and Sandra Perez, who will assist as consultants. Heggen speaks Spanish and will work with Latina sisters to facilitate the seminars in Spanish.

"Sister Care is revolutionary," Perez says. "What came to me is that there are other women who have the same story as mine. I thought I was the only one experiencing the suffering. If there are two of us, there are thousands. This is cutting edge."—*Heidi Martin for Mennonite Women USA*

MCC suspends work in Egypt

Thirteen international staff are relocated to Strasbourg, France.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has moved its international workers out of Egypt because of the ongoing civil unrest there.

Thirteen international staff, including two children, were temporarily relocated to MCC's West Europe office in Strasbourg, France, at the end of January. Another MCC worker elsewhere in Africa was vacationing and visiting family in Cairo when the unrest began. She has now returned.

MCC also has three national staff in Egypt, all of whom are doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances, says Tom Snowdon, MCC Egypt co-representative with Judith, his spouse. The Snowdons are from Saint-Joseph-De-Kent, New Brunswick.

MCC relocated its international workers because there were concerns for the safety of workers, and MCC work in Egypt was at a standstill. MCC also wanted to save its partner organizations in Egypt from worrying about how to care for the workers. MCC's work in Egypt focuses on education and peacebuilding.

At one point a church organization MCC partners with supplied stranded MCC workers with money to help with their attempts at leaving.

Another time a priest called and offered to send a van to collect MCC workers in Cairo and take them to a church house outside the city.

Trying to leave was an ordeal, he says. "Limited phone service, no Internet and extremely difficult transportation due to the curfew and congestion all made it difficult to do anything. The Cairo airport was in chaos, and the crush of people got scary at times."

The relocated staff are doing well, "just a little tired and jangled," he says. Given the uncertainty in Egypt, it isn't clear where the workers will go after they have been debriefed at the MCC office.

"We all want to go back as soon as possible to help in any way that is appropriate for foreigners to do," says Snowdon. "But it is true that the future there is uncertain, and we don't want to sound heroic and to minimize that reality."

Annie and Jean-Victor, MCC representatives for West Europe, host the Snowdons. In a Feb. 9 e-mail to *The Mennonite*, the Snowdons wrote that life felt normal before the first protest on Jan. 25.

"We walked confidently down the street and went about our business, but things very quickly became tense. ... By the time we left the country on Jan. 31, there was a curfew from 3 p.m. every day," they wrote. "The streets and many properties were being guarded by local citizens. They were using whatever weapon they could acquire for protection, knives, sticks and some guns. The streets were quiet, and there was virtually no traffic."

The Snowdons do not know any of the protesters.

"The situation is very complex, and there are no valid simple analyses," they wrote. "Egyptians love their country and their history and want to make it a better place for their children."—*Mennonite Central Committee with reporting by Anna Groff*

Discover South America!

Paraguay - Peru

Iguazu Falls, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies, Lima, Machu Picchu

September 23 – October 6, 2011

Contact Rudolf Duerksen at 1-204-415-6836
southway@shaw.ca
www.southwaytours.com

BE MORE THAN A TOURIST

2011 TOURS

ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (April 27 - May 6)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4 - 20)
LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE (May 11 - 24)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13 - 22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23 - July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22 - August 4)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (August 9 - 17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (September 19 - 28)
A PILGRIMAGE to PORTUGAL (September 20 - 30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22 - October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14 - 23)
From NAZARETH to ROME (November 10 - 22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14 - 26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7 -11)

2012 TOURS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (February 3 - 23)
TOUR TO GUATEMALA (February 24 - March 4)
VISIT MEXICO & its COPPER CANYON (March 9 - 18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18 - 31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16 - 27)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3 - 16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3 - 13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10 - 23)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12 - 26)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

CALENDAR

Friends of Shirati support the people of East Africa with medical and educational assistance. The Annual Friends of Shirati Banquet will be held at 6 p.m. on March 12 at The Gathering Place, Mount Joy, Pa. For more information visit www.friendsofshirati.org or contact Dale Ressler at 717-884-9074 or e-mail daleressler@friendsofshirati.org.

WORKERS

Chenlo, Mauricio Walter, was ordained for his ministry as denominational minister for church planting with Mennonite Church USA at Raleigh Mennonite Church, Raleigh, N.C., on Jan. 16.

Hendricks, Patricia, was licensed for chaplaincy ministry at Mercy House, Harrisonburg, Va., at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church on Jan. 16.

Kanagy, Audrey A., was licensed as associate pastor at Living Light Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Jan. 16.

Landis, Isaac, began a term as associate pastor of youth and young adults at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on Jan. 5.

Rutt, Nelson L., was licensed as youth pastor for Martindale District, Martindale, Pa., on Jan. 23.

OBITUARIES

Birkey, Leslie V., 90, Foosland, Ill., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Verena Heiser Birkey. Parents: Joseph and Ida Zehr Birkey. Children: Duane; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Britsch, Doris C. Lugbill, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 27, 2010. Spouse: Dale Britsch (deceased). Parents: Eli and Jennie Burkholder Lugbill. Children: Barbara Kauffman, Norma Sigg; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Burkey, Barabara Faith Brenneman, 80, Albany, Ore., died Dec. 29, 2010. Spouse: Willard Burkey. Parents: Harvey and Uarda Hills Brenneman. Children: Dianna Eshleman, Lee, David; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 1 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Coleman, Nathanael Allen, 0, Kidron, Ohio, stillborn on Dec. 30, 2010. Parents: Chip Allen and Martha Rose Kratzer Coleman. Siblings: Silas Coleman, Ezra Coleman. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Frey, Emagene "Jean" Short, 82, Pettisville, Ohio, died Jan. 13. Spouse: James "Jim" J. Frey. Parents: Raymond and Alta Amstutz Short. Children: Bernard "Barney," Ken, Becky Peabody, Charles, Janet Frey; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Friesen, Wilbur D., 93, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 6. Spouse: LaVerna Waltner Friesen (deceased). Parents: Dietrich and Mary Janzen Friesen. Children: Ila Mebius, Short Larson; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Gehman, Mary C. Kulp, 99, Bally, Pa., died Dec. 5, 2010. Spouse: Abraham B. Gehman (deceased). Parents: Elias W. and Elizabeth Rachel Clemens Kulp. Children: Linford, Abraham, Rhoda, Johanna, James, Ada, Merrill, Ronald, Harley, Dwight; 15 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Bally Mennonite Church.

Gingerich, Viola Bontrager, 94, Shipshewana, Ind., died Dec. 11, 2010. Spouse: Christy Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Jacob D. and Fannie Schrock Bontrager. Children: Betty Graber, Ida Mae Gingerich; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Make a difference in the world.

Study Public Health at Bluffton University.

Classes begin fall of 2011.

bluffton.edu/publichealth

Headrick, Wanda Lee Welty, 75, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Lloyd M. Headrick. Parents: Gerhard and Idell McFarlane Welty. Children: Denise Krase, Peggy Sieber, Jackie Headrick, Kyle; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Heinrichs, Edwin, 82, Altona, Manitoba, died Jan. 13. Spouse: Betty Zacharias Heinrichs. Parents: William W. and Tina Teichroeb Heinrichs. Children: Archie, Heather Miller, Dwight, Herbie, Eugene, Delores Enns, Douglas; 16 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Hershberger, Suvilla M. Bontrager, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 8. Spouse: Joseph Hershberger. Parents: Menno J.S. and Fannie Yoder Bontrager. Children: Esther Gingerich, Jeremiah, Phillip; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Kapper, Bernice Hershberger, 89, Louisville, Ohio, died Jan. 16. Spouse: Melvin Kapper (deceased). Parents: David Monroe and Ida Crilow Hershberger. Children: Charlene Fausnight, Dennis, David; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Kramer, Kathryn Esther Goering, 85, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Willard J. Kramer (deceased). Parents: Jonas and Anna Graber Goering. Children: Norris, Ronald, Charles; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Salem Mennonite church, Freeman.

Marner, Wallace Dale, 84, Kalona, Iowa, died Nov. 29, 2010. Spouse: Leola Verle Stoltzfus Marner. Parents: Chris and Mary Gingerich Marner. Children: Dale, Karen Gugel; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Martin, Arlene M. Martin, 81, New Holland, Pa., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Chester G. Martin (deceased). Parents: Weaver and Frances Martin Martin. Children: Carolyn Sensenig, Charlotte Harsh, Fred; four grandchildren; one step-grandson; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Garden Spot Village Chapel, New Holland.

Miller, Nellie F. Zimmerman, 82, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Chester "Chet" Miller. Parents: John and Ada Showalter Zimmerman. Children: Rock, Easley, Candy Cirricione; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Miller, Verton Samuel, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 14. Spouse: Anna Pearl Brenneman Miller. Parents: Rev. Albert S. and Maggie Miller Miller. Children: Ken, Kathy Scheuerman, Donna Darby; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Mullet, David LeRoy "Roy," 90, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Bess Johnson Mullet. Parents: David J. and Maude Kauffman Mullet. Children: David, Bob, Paul, Steve, Mick; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Peachey, Elam J., 70, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 6 of a heart attack. Spouse: Nancy Hartzler Peachey. Parents: Elam C. and Barbara Yoder Peachey. Children: Shana Boshart, Cheryl Peachey Stoner, Leigh Ann O'Halloran; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Phonsulinthone, Venethong, 64, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 8. Spouse: Phomma Phonsulinthone (deceased). Children: Keo, Monta, Sivilay, Phao, Pheng, Phoue, Phet, Phone, Phan, Phay; 25 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Reimer, Doris June, 77, Whitewater, Kan., died Jan. 15. Parents: Gustav and Justine Harder Reimer. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater.

Roggie, Ralph A., 78, Lowville, N.Y., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Frieda M. Jantzi Roggie. Parents: Samuel Roggie. Children: Elizabeth Steria Glenfield, Joyce Zehr, Glendon, Lois Roberts; 12 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Iseneker Funeral Home, Inc., Lowville.

Roth, Marianna Mae Gerig, 76, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Edwin L. Roth. Parents: Vernon and Mabel Gerig. Children: Tim, Ted; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 22 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Rufenacht, Marlin D., 80, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 20. Spouse: Lois Beck Rufenacht. Parents: Glen and Laura Grieser Rufenacht. Children: Craig, Brad, Janelle Beck, Nedra Nolander; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 24 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Schmidt, Dorothy Frey, 96, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 9. Spouse: Arnold H. Schmidt. Parents: Peter and Agnetha Reimer Frey. Children: Donavon, Karen Unrau, Geneva Reimer, Vera Wuertz, Rollin; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Schmidt, Kenneth H., 78, South Hutchinson, Kan., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Phyllis Eileen Egli Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Harvey Fred and Beatrice Marguerite Smith Schmidt. Children: Arlin, Rita Martin, Nancy Magliery, Susan Funk; seven grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 29 at South Hutchinson Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Susan Unruh, 103, Goessel, Kan., died Dec. 25, 2010. Spouse: Nickolai "Nick" Schmidt (deceased). Parents: John A. and Elizabeth Schmidt Unruh. Children: Julia Regier, Susan Duerksen, DeLome Schmidt, Rita Sperry, Otto; 16 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; 16 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Selzer, Bertha Ellen Sommerfield, 85, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 10, 2010. Spouse: Elvin M. Selzer. Parents: Jacob and Matie Young Sommerfield. Children: Diane Helmuth, Donna Stokes, Janet Bootman; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 14 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Showalter, James Edwin, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Joyce Blosser Showalter. Parents: H.D. and Flora Grove Showalter. Children: James Michael, Kevin E., Dawn Showalter, Darrell C., Dean Allen; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Shenk, Evelyn Ruth Landis, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 20 from complications of Lewy Body Dementia. Spouse: John M. Shenk. Parents: Abram Paul and Eva Domer Grim Landis. Children: Gloria S. Kniss, Jonathan, James, Joseph; four grandchildren. Celebration-of-life services: Jan. 24 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community Strite Auditorium, Harrisonburg, and Jan. 25 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. More about Mrs. Shenk is located at http://tiny.cc/meckl, and memories and condolences may be shared with the family by clicking the link there, choosing Current Obituaries, and selecting January 2011. Donations in memory of Evelyn may be sent to Eastern Mennonite Seminary, to help enable others to attend.

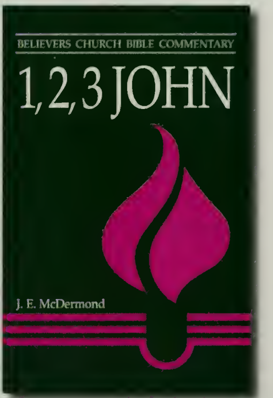
Smucker, Jose "Mike" Miguel, 35, Indianapolis, Ind., died Jan. 13 of cancer. Parents: Paul Mark and Jeanne Smucker. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Snyder, Leta Mae Miller, 85, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Donald W. Snyder. Parents: John E. and Lucy Yoder Miller. Children: Donna Snyder Shank, JoAnne Lehman, Cathy Cameron; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 25 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Thomas, Cora Hostetler, 91, Johnstown, Pa., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Freeman Thomas (deceased). Parents: Noah and Emma Kaufman Hostetler. Children: Floyd, Grace Stayrook; 18 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; 17 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.

Unternahrer, Barbara Wenger, 90, Wayland, Iowa, died Dec. 16, 2010. Spouse: Noah Unternahrer (deceased). Parents: John R. and Katie S. Christner Wenger. Children: Kathryn Smith, Ronald, David, Rosetta Koerner, Esther Amstutz; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Chruch, Wayland.

Herald Press



1, 2, 3 John

Written during a time of church schism that has left Christians confused and questioning their status before God, the author of 1,2, 3 John argues that the Christian life has two fundamental markers: Acceptance of Jesus Christ's role in God's plan of salvation, and the need to practice love in interactions with other believers.

In his commentary, the 24th volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series, **J. E. McDermond** shows that that these two crucial concepts are as relevant and important today as they were back then.

$24.99 USD/$28.99 CAD

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Eastern Mennonite University is currently seeking applicants for a ***director of planned giving***. Responsibilities include managing the planned giving program and work collaboratively with the President, VP for Advancement, Executive Director of Development and a development team of associates to secure annual, capital and planned gifts for the university. Full-time position. EMU graduate preferred, tax law and/or planned giving training and experience required, commitment to EMU's mission and vision, willingness to travel and be away for extended periods of time and some evenings and weekends required. Please send application, resumé and the names, addresses and phone numbers of three references to: Human Resources, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, hr@emu.edu Individuals who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EMU is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Church planter. **New York Mennonite Conference** seeks [half- or full-time] ***primary team leader*** for a movement of multiethnic, holistic, Anabaptist church plants starting in lower West Side Buffalo, NY. Seeking visionary, Spirit-led leader with passion for reconciliation and advancing God's kingdom. Contact Gene Miller: gene@yorkscorners.org.

Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) in Salunga, Pa., seeks candidates for the position of ***president***. As a ministry of Lancaster Mennonite Conference and other supporting Anabaptist congregations, EMM supports over 200 field/administrative personnel in 41 countries. The president will play a vital role in the ongoing development of programs to witness to people and places where the church is "not yet." The position requires deep knowledge and appreciation of the Anabaptist constituency, at least five years of cross-cultural/overseas experience, ability to relate to a theologically diverse constituency, strong administrative/management skills and willingness to travel extensively. Interested candidates should contact Kirk Stiffney with MHS Alliance at emmsearch@mhsonline.org.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking a ***receptionist*** for its offices in Akron, Pa. This is a full-time service worker position. MCC provides housing, living expenses, full medical insurance plus a monthly stipend to service workers. A job description is available at www.mcc.org/serve. Send resumé and letter of interest to: Prem Dick at: psd@mcc.org or MCC Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501 or call 717-859-1151.

Bluffton University invites applications for a ***full-time, renewable contract (non-tenure track) position in choral music*** beginning fall 2011. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until position is filled. Please visit our website at www.bluffton.edu/about/employment for position responsibilities, requirements and how to submit an application. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Mennonite Church USA seeks a ***half-time denominational youth minister*** to join its leadership development team. The primary role of the denominational youth minister is to build relationships with and facilitate networking among Mennonite Church USA entities that nurture faith in youth and young adults. The ideal candidate will be able to articulate a vision for the missional church we seek to become. She or he should be detail oriented and possess a good understanding of youth ministry, Mennonite Church USA and Christ-centered Anabaptist theology. At least five-year's experience in congregational youth ministry is desired along with strong written and oral communication skills. Fluency in Spanish is a plus. For a detailed job description or to submit a resumé, cover letter and work samples, contact Executive Board Human Resources at HR@MennoniteUSA.org or call 1-866-866-2872, ext. 23041 or 574-523-3041 and ask for Executive Board Human Resources. Mennonite Church USA is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and Racial/Ethnic people to apply. Resumés will be received until the position is filled.

***Executive director*, Mennonite Publishing Network/ ThirdWay**. Seeking a visionary leader with passion for a publishing and media ministry. Reporting to the binational Board and based in Harrisonburg, Va., the Executive Director will lead the integration of Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media in the transition to a new multi-media agency providing Anabaptist formation and witness resources. Five years or more executive leadership experience and the willingness to regularly travel within North America. See www.mpn.net/about/openings.html or e-mail indication of interest to search@mpn.net.

House-sitting opportunity: Beautiful San Luis Valley, Colorado. Love gardening, chickens, cats, mountains? ***House-sitter*** needed June 18-July 23 in Saguache. 2 bedroom, 1 bath, fully stocked and use of our car. Water garden, care for chickens/cats, eat garden produce! 719-655-2776 or sarahkoehn@yahoo.com

For Sale: Orchard, cider mill, equipment, house, greenhouse, pole barns, 10 acres, mid-Michigan. $190,000; 989-224-7678

Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning, N.Y., is seeking a ***long-term pastor***. We are part of New York Mennonite Conference. If you are interested, please send your Ministerial Leadership Information form to Dan Gallagher or contact him at DG.CorningNY@gmail.com.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

I	E	H	O	V	A	H	■	S	A	V	I	O	P
E	■	A	■	I	■	O	■	H	■	■	M	■	E
S	U	N	■	N	■	E	A	I	O	■	M	A	N
U	■	O	■	E	■	I	■	E	■	■	A	■	O
S	■	■	M	■	■	N	■	E	I	O	N	■	W
■	S	H	E	P	H	E	P	O	■	■	U	■	N
A	■	■	O	■	■	S	■	■	■	■	E	■	■
O	A	V	I	O	■	S	I	A	P	■	E	A	W
V	■	■	A	■	I	■	■	P	■	■	■	■	O
O	E	O	I	E	S	I	A	M	E	N	I	■	P
C	■	■	O	■	P	■	■	O	■	■	P	O	O
A	■	C	P	E	A	T	O	P	■	■	U	■	■
I	■	■	■	■	E	■	N	■	W	A	I	E	R
E	E	■	H	E	E	P	E	P	■	■	H	■	■

The **department of nursing at Goshen (Ind.) College** invites applications for a ***full-time, tenure-track teaching position*** beginning August 2011. Duties include teaching pediatric nursing in the classroom and clinical setting and pharmacology in the undergraduate program, and teaching courses in the family nurse practitioner program in the master of science in nursing program. Doctorate in nursing or related field preferred; master's degree in nursing required. Significant experience in nursing practice and nursing education desired. For further details and to apply, see the position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment. With a commitment to building a diverse faculty and staff, minority people are encouraged to apply.

• • travel with a purpose • •

Mennonite Your Way

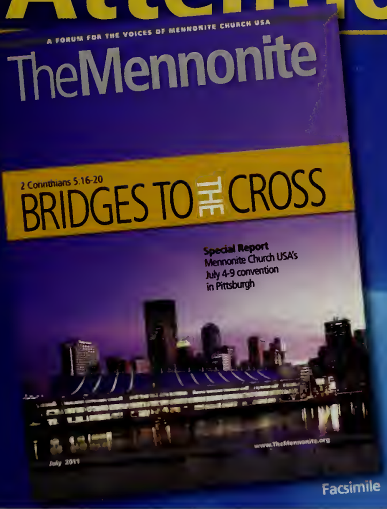
2011 TOURS

- **Canadian Rockies & Parks, *June 16 - July 7***
- **Cape Cod, Whales & Mansions, *July 18-22***
- **Colorful Vermont, *September 19-22***
- **Balloons, Parks & Cactus, *October 3-23***

(most tours offer pick-ups enroute or fly-in option - please inquire)

MYW Tours • Box 425 • Landisville, PA 17538 • 717/653-9288 • 800/276-1991
Email: myw1525@aol.com • web: www.mywtours.com

Attention pastors



Facsimile

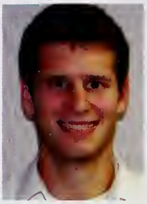
Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* **Pittsburgh 2011** issue available

Everyone in your congregation can read about the happenings at **Pittsburgh 2011** even if they don't receive *The Mennonite.*

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at **800-790-2498** or **Subscriptions@themennonite.org** to place your order. We will send your order in bulk at $2 per copy ($3 Cnd). Your order and payment **must be received by July 15**. No invoice will be issued at this low price. Send payment to *The Mennonite,* 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

TheMennonite
www.TheMennonite.org

The 'good old days'



Thomas Dunn is associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

It is easy to get caught up in feelings of nostalgia. As a pastor, I've been part of many funerals that have been a blessing to me. Burying and celebrating the lives of people that have lived 70, 80, 90 or even 100-plus years of faithfulness to Christ is a privilege. Listening to families as they remember and honor the loved one that has gone to glory is to remember the good old days, when life was simpler, slower and a little less comfortable.

I sometimes catch myself getting caught up in the moment: running around the farm with a bunch of brothers and sisters sounds like a better alternative to playing video games alone. Waking up early to go out to the barn for chores seems like a better alternative to sleeping late into the morning. Receiving a handwritten letter seems like a better alternative to a buzzing cell phone in your pocket. Looking forward to church on a Sunday because that was the main (or only) social interaction of the week seems like a better alternative to trying to squeeze church in on top of the dozen or so other activities you are a part of.

These are the days gone by, and it can be easy to romanticize them. However, it would be difficult to find too many people who would be willing to give up all that we have and go back to this style of life (in other words, you rarely see anyone becoming Amish that did not grow up in an Amish home). And even if there are some that would choose this, it begs the question, What's the point?

I'm sure there are professional psychologists that could explain to me why nostalgia can feel so good to us. But the more important question is this: How is each generation being faithful to Jesus Christ?

The call of Christ is the same to all generations, all cultures and all people of the world. Christ bids us to die to ourselves and offer our lives as living sacrifices to him.

This may have looked different 50 years ago from how it looks today, but I submit that throughout all time, this is an equally difficult and equally easy thing to do.

It is difficult because we are selfish and sinful people, unwilling to yield everything we have and everything we are to someone else, even if that someone else is the One True God.

It is easy because once we come to grips with who we are, it is an immense blessing to know that there is a Savior whose burden is easy and whose yoke is light.

It is at once the most difficult and the most joyful decision a person can make.

> The temptation to get caught up in wishing for days gone by is nothing new, and it will always be a temptation for us.

Ecclesiastes 7:10 says: "Do not say, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this."

The temptation to get caught up in wishing for days gone by is nothing new, and it will always be a temptation for us. Just as the author of Ecclesiastes did, we need to be sure to name this sentiment for what it is: not wise.

This is not to say we should not study our history and learn from the past, but as soon as we find ourselves longing for the good old days, we have gone too far.

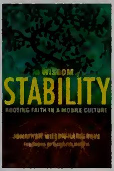
I challenge you to examine how you view the past. When you look at where we are now, in 2011, as compared with a half-century ago, what is your gut feeling? Do you find yourself thinking we have digressed? Are we worse off now? Are things just not as good as they used to be? I caution against getting caught up in the good old days; rather focus on the now and put your trust in the Lord.

The call of Christ has not changed for 2,000 years. What is Christ calling you to right now, in 2011? What is Christ calling us, his church to, today? How can we be faithful to Jesus Christ right now? TM

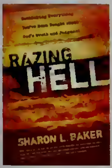
FILM REVIEW

The Way Back (PG-13) tells the harrowing story of inmates at a Siberian gulag in 1942 who escape and walk 4,000 miles overland to freedom in India, though some die on the way. The landscapes are stunning and the acting fine. The problem is that it's based on a memoir by Slavomir Rawicz that was found to be false. Nevertheless, it draws attention to the evil practices of the Soviet regime, which unjustly imprisoned thousands of people.—*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS



The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Paraclete Press, 2010, $14.99) offers a much-needed correction to our tendency to look for the greener grass elsewhere. Wilson-Hartgrove, a leader in the new monastic movement, writes that "in a culture that is characterized by unprecedented mobility and speed, … the most important thing most of us can do to grow spiritually is to stay in the place where we are. He draws on various sources—from the desert fathers and mothers to contemporary writers and relates stories from his own community in Durham, N.C.—*gh*



Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught about God's Wrath and Judgment by Sharon L. Baker (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010, $17) tackles a topic head-on that few are willing to address: the doctrine of hell. Baker calls for reading the Bible with a "Jesus lens" that helps us see that "God in Christ interrupted the cycle of violence with divine love, seeking to reconcile and restore rather than punish and retaliate." She strives for a popular style and mostly succeeds, but her appendix on references and commentary is helpful.—*gh*

Editing history to make it nicer

A new kind of censorship is becoming vogue. Rather than removing documents from the public, some are editing history to make some documents nicer, less offensive to an increasingly ignorant nation of readers.

In February, NewSouth Books released a new version of Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in which all 219 occurrences of the word "nigger" will be replaced with the word "slave."

Miami Herald columnist Leonard Pitts, who is an African American, argues that this fix, despite good intentions, is wrong. He offers three reasons against it.

First, he writes, "any work of art represents a series of conscious choices on the part of the artist," and the audience, while free to accept or reject those choices, is not free to "substitute its own."

Second, he writes, "it is never a good idea to sugarcoat the past," and "Twain's use of the reprehensible word was an accurate reflection of that era."

Third, he laments that the state of reading comprehension in this country is so bad that "not only can our children not divine the nuances of a masterpiece but that we will now protect them from having to even try."

Lorrie Moore, a fiction writer, claims a position "between traditionalists outraged at censorship and those who feel this might be a way to get teenagers, especially African-American boys, comfortable reading a literary classic." She thinks both are mistaken.

She agrees it is wrong to replace the N-word with "slave," since "the latter word is already in the novel and has a different meaning from 'nigger,' so that substitution just mucks up the prose — its meaning, its voice, its verisimilitude." The remedy, she writes, is "to refuse to teach this novel in high school and to wait until college."

Moore goes on to write: "The young black American male of today, whose dignity in our public schools is not always preserved or made a priority, does not need at the start of his literary life to be immersed in an even more racist era … not if one's goal is to get that teenager to like books."

Instead, she would recommend, for example, Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.*

Meanwhile, the new House of Representatives convened on Jan. 6, and the Republican leadership started the session by reading the text of the U.S. Constitution aloud. The readers, however, omitted the text of Article I, Section 2, that deals with the apportionment of House seats among the states, which is said to be based on "the whole number of free persons" and "three-fifths of all other persons."

In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, Adam Kirsch points out that "trying to distract us from something ugly only makes the ugliness harder to miss." He acknowledges that "for many readers, encountering classic literature means sometimes finding yourself excluded, or insulted, in this way. For blacks reading Twain, certainly, but also for Jews reading Shakespeare or Dickens, and for women reading, say, Plato (among countless others)."

The Constitution, Kirsch writes, "was written in the expectation that it would be corrected. And it needed correction, or amendment, for the same essential reason: the framers' imagination of the people they led was not full enough."

We are to study and learn from history, not try to fix it. Ignoring the fallible humanity of the founding fathers, for example, only removes us from the real world.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Gladys Alderfer, Sellersville, Pa.
Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Amanda Bartel, Wichita, Kan.
Arva Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Brady Bigler, St. Thomas, Pa.
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Mark Boshart, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Judy Dintaman, Howe, Ind.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Bernice Esau, North Newton, Kan.
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
Sarah Geiser, Apple Creek, Ohio
Christopher Gering, Ritzville, Wash.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Joyce K. Graber, West Unity, Ohio
Bonnie Handrich Venhuizen, Isle, Minn.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Verna Helmuth, Sarasota, Fla.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Joyce Hofer, Freeman, S.D.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Marvin & Ruth Kaufman, Broadway, Va.
Dorothy Kingsley, Amenia, N.D.
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt. Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Esther Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Richard & Shirley Mast, Graham, N.Y.
Erma Maust, Sarasota, Fla.
Joe & Jane Miller, Mount Union, Pa.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcille Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Miller, Lakewood, Colo.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Al Neuenschwander, Berne, Ind.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Anna Nolt, Quakertown, Pa.
Mary Helen Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Howard Piggee, Fredericksburg, Va.
Ella K. Regier, Newton, Kan.
Fancheon Resler, Bluffton, Ind.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Elvira Schierling, Denver, Colo.
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Lavera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Debra Selzer, Canton, Kan.
Esther Shaum, Engadine, Mich.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Ethel Slabaugh, Sturgis, Mich.
Kathy Smith, Archbold, Ohio
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Dorcas Steider, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Bonnie Stuckey, West Unity, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Eileen Wenger, Leola, Pa.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Elmer Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Yoder, Huntington, Pa.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Joyce Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

Discover what's next
Retirement living designed to enhance your life

Fran Kinney rediscovered the joy of volunteering at Dock Woods. She holds babies in the campus Children's Center.

Joining the Living Branches family has given Fran the opportunity to build new relationships and serve others.

What's next for you?

Visit www.livingbranches.org

Dock Meadows
Hatfield, PA
215-822-0688

Souderton Mennonite Homes
Souderton, PA
215-723-9881

Dock Woods
Lansdale, PA
215-368-4438

LIVING BRANCHES

What's in a name?

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

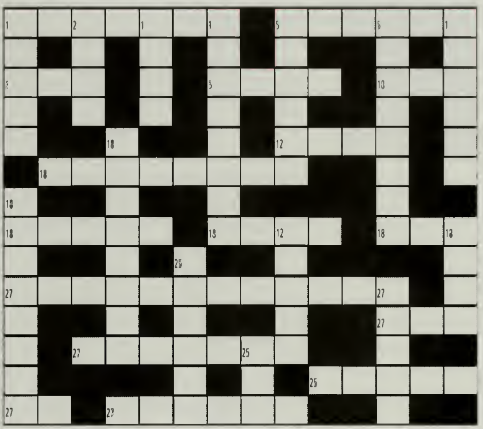
All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. Familiar form of Yahweh ("he is") used in the King James Version (Is. 12:2)
5. "Exalted be God, the Rock, my ___ !" (2 Sam. 22:47)
8. "But for you who revere my name, the ___ of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." (Mal. 4:2)
9. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already ___, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11)
10. "… just as the Son of ___ did not come to be served, but to serve …" (Mt. 20:28)
12. "see, the ____ of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed …" (Rev. 5:5)
13. "I am the good ____ …"
15. A blind beggar called, "Jesus, Son of ___ , have mercy on me!" (Mk 10)
16. "A ____ will come out of Jacob …" (Nu. 24:17)
18. "The ___ will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations." (Is. 51)
21. The Messiah fulfilled the prophecy from the ___ _____ (two words).
23. "… your ___ and your staff, they comfort me."
24. Maker of heaven and earth
26. The woman asked, "Sir, … Where can you get this living ____?" (Jn. 4)
27. Prefix/suffix meaning "God"—"__ Elohe Israel" (Gen. 33:20) or "__ Shaddai."
28. "The Lord is my ____ ; I will not be afraid." (Heb. 13:6)

DOWN

1. "… and you are to give him the name ___ "
2. "The Son sits at the right ___ of the Majesty in heaven."
3. "I am the true ____…"
4. "Who is like you—majestic in ____ , awesome in glory …" (Ex. 15:11).
5. "He is my ___ and the horn of my salvation …" (Ps. 18).
6. "They will call him ____ —which means 'God with us.'"
7. "And I will raise up for them a plant of ___ …" (KJV - Ez. 34:29).
11. "For there is one God and one ____ between God and men …" (1 Tim. 2).
14. The King James Version calls Jesus "an ___ with the Father"—someone who speaks on our behalf. (1 Jn. 2:1)
17. "Put on the full ___ of God."
19. John 1:1 says this was with God from the beginning and "the ___ was God."
20. "… so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of ____ , who summons you by name" (Is. 45:3).
22. "I am the way and the ___ and the life."
25. "No one has ever seen God, but God the ___ and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (Jn. 1:18)



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our May 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

April 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

ANSWERS TO THE MARCH PUZZLE MAY BE FOUND ON PAGE 57

(Continued from page 5)

alcohol-dependant—maybe a company stance about such people. Our congregation has and has had members who did not dare drink any alcoholic drinks. Brothers and sisters in such a beverage business should express concern that they not encourage alcohol problems for anyone.—*Stanley L Freed, Harleysville, Pa.*

I am writing with reference to the article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia"(January): I do not wish to imply that all who drink alcoholic beverages are "bad" or that its use cannot be kept in moderation. However, it is a considerable problem and danger in our families, communities, country and world. I am glad for the growing consciousness supporting "nonalcoholic" beverages in those years of my youth and in my Mennonite college days. I applaud the Christian witness of teetotaling. I feel it was inappropriate for this article to have been printed "face value" (without editorial comment) in our "official" Mennonite Church USA publication.—*Floyd Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.*

I suggest that *The Mennonite*'s staff and readers who uphold the beauty of wine sit in on an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and then attend a Mothers Against Drunk Driving meeting—or talk to a family who has lost a baby, a preschooler and a mother in an alcohol-related accident.

The article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January) quotes "self-restraint" as the solution to the potential problem. Exactly what is self-restraint? I cannot accept that as an answer. How do you measure self-restraint? Predisposition to alcohol is not an elaborate phrase but a real medical condition that is often a serious reality. When you discover your teenager in your alcohol cabinet, don't be surprised if you hear the words, "I'll just drink a little."

I trust and pray our Mennonite tradition of abstinence will continue to be a positive example of hope in this torn and frightened world.—*Judy Kropf Hall Molalla, Ore.*

The article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" suggests self-restraint and moderation. There is no self-control in drug use, and alcohol is a drug, just as heroin and cocaine are drugs. I would be ashamed to show this article to my Seventh-day Adventist and Mormon friends, saying this is a true representation of my Mennonite church.

As I look at my church, I see us sliding more and more into the vices of the world. Unless we stand apart from the world we cannot be an effective witness for Jesus, who fought the evils of an evil society with every breath he took. Do not think I want Mennonites to crawl into a hole and stay there. But I do want us to live with dignity, being immune to the temptations that may harm us and others.—*Harold Hall, Molalla, Ore.*

Kudos to *The Mennonite* for the January article blessing commercial wine production. Now that you are obligated to accept advertisements for alcoholic beverages, your financial constraints should be all in the past. And if the wine producers and oenophiles among us can just convince the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board to mandate "the more biblical" use of wine at Communion, their financial success will also be assured.—*Dean Wyse, West Unity, Ohio*

I researched the statistics on alcohol use and abuse. This information is a bit harder to come by since the Uniform Sunday school lessons no longer carry a lesson on temperance. But according to WebMd, between 12 and 14 million U.S. adults abuse alcohol. I would want to reconsider being part of an industry that leads to the death of more than 16,000 people due to alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents. In addition, 310,000 injuries per year are the result of alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes.

I discovered the extent of agricultural production given to alcohol and wonder if I should be producing food for the hungry with my land, not alcohol for the rich. I wonder if Jesus would give us an evaluation of this question? This could be the focus: Is this the best use of time, land and resources in a world of hungry people?—*David Alleman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I was rather surprised to see the article about the winery in the January issue. My reaction was, Really, this is where we're at in regard to the issue of alcohol use in the Mennonite church? We have an article about it in our church periodical? That may seem like a critical response, but it's actually honest, since I'm constantly becoming more aware of the prevailing attitudes about alcohol consumption among fellow Mennonites. That I'm saddened by it isn't the point. The fact that it has changed so drastically in the course of a generation or two is what surprises me.

Perhaps we're expecting too little of our members, in terms of example, than we ought? Perhaps the reason alcohol use attitudes have changed significantly is that we're not espousing otherwise?—*Doug Kratzer, Dalton, Ohio*

For once, after reading the January issue about winemaking in Virginia, I'm hopeful not many of our young members read *The Mennonite*. That article tempts one to give it a try, since so many Mennonites seem to approve of it. This article should have never been printed in this magazine—or any other magazine for that matter—since it makes alcohol intake seem OK. You owe your readers an apology. One final thought, I wonder if this business gives the owners a great opportunity for Jesus Christ witnessing.—*John Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.*

Investing in Hope: Hope = trouble + grace

We know that suffering produces … hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.—Romans 5:3b-5 (TNIV)

We … groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we are saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all.—Romans 8:23-24a (TNIV)

Since we live in a country committed to the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, it seems upside down to imagine that suffering could in any way produce hope. It runs against the grain of our imagined universe.

Yet in the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul declares that the groans of God's people echo the deep groans of the whole creation. Along with the rest of the created order, humans struggle for release from the bondage to decay.

As Christians, we believe that God's reality stretches far beyond the reach of the most highly trained human mind or eye. We harbor the hope that beyond the visible pain and suffering of the world, God's invisible hand is bringing about a new creation. This hope is much more than a wish, more than a wager that things will turn out well in the end. It is based on what we have already heard and seen.

This was implicit in the ideas that Cheryl Bridges Johns shared with attendees at Eastern Mennonite Seminary's School for Leadership Training in mid-January. A Pentecostal pastor, scholar and ecumenist, Johns made the case that Pentecost is but the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit's work to bring about a new creation. It is the Spirit who translates our wordless groans of pain into prayers of intercession, who enlivens our dulled and cynical existence with the enchanted wonder of a child and who empowers and transforms us to become a different kind of people.

Through the ministry of the Spirit in our lives, the grace of God enables us to live hopefully amid the troubles of the world. As Paul Scott Wilson says it, "trouble + grace = hope, where grace > trouble."

In the midst of pain and suffering, our hope is not merely nurtured by human longing, reason or endeavor. Our hope is built on the multifaceted ways that God meets us in the midst of trouble. It is built on the confidence that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

From time to time, I have asked people when they felt most loved by God or closest to God. Almost inevitably, they speak of ways that God "showed up" in times of deepest need.

Grace lies at the very core of the Christian gospel. Grace (especially in its offer of forgiveness to an offender) is what makes Christian faith unique among world religions. Therefore, the uniqueness of Christian hope lies in recognition of God's grace. Grace is the common thread that runs from Christian conversion through formation, transformation and redemptive social action in the midst of the troubles of the world.

The story of Mennonite Disaster Service is eloquently foreshadowed in the title: *The Hammer Rings Hope*. We bring hope to others when our work aligns with the work of God in the world.

Our hope is built on the multifaceted ways that God meets us in the midst of trouble.

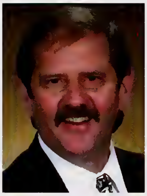
As Christians, we believe that our ultimate hope for the future lies in the grace of God as expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We invest in that hope by casting ourselves on God in the midst of suffering, pain and despair. And by God's grace, the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

###############################FIRM CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 935 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P7
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 105
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

Help for Sudan's Christians



Everett J. Thomas

The revolution in Egypt and social turmoil across the Arab world may have provided unexpected help for African Christians in a poor country to the south: Sudan. On Jan. 25, the world learned that the citizens of southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly to secede from the north and create their own country. On Feb. 7, Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir said he would accept the south's secession. Such aquiescence seemed improbable just three months ago. But al-Bashir may be eyeing the revolutions in Arab countries to the north and deciding he has more pressing concerns than southern Sudan.

The struggle in Sudan, the largest country in Africa, centers around the Arab Muslim north vs. the south with its African Christians and animist religions. For years, al-Bashir and his forces attempted to suppress Christianity and "Arabize" the south. In doing so, tens of thousands were killed or died of starvation in the Darfur region, and others became victims of forced immigration.

But now, some Arab regimes are disintegrating. This should allow the Republic of South Sudan, as its leaders plan to name the new country in July, some breathing space as it attempts to create its own national identity.

There are significant challenges ahead. Southern Sudan is rich in oil. But the new country is landlocked, and pipelines that carry the oil to markets run through the north. Ultimately, oil may require both countries to collaborate since it is the primary resource for both.

A second challenge relates to the Abyei region (see map). Two rival ethnic groups claim the right to belong there, and both north and south Sudan claim the region. Ultimately, the fate of Abyei may be decided by its own referendum.

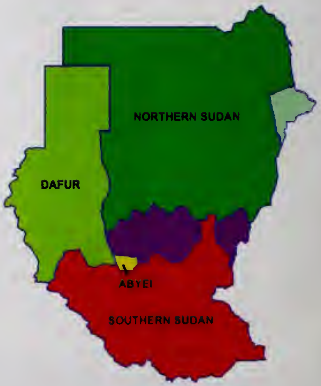
It will also be difficult to modernize southern Sudan, since it has been under the grip of al-Bashir's government in the capital city of Khartoum. Here is how Mennonite Central Committee described the situation in a Feb. 15 release:

"From 1983 to 2005, during the nation's most recent civil war, more than 4 million people fled southern Sudan. Through years of neglect and fighting, much of the area was left without running water, electricity, paved roads, schools or health clinics. Since a peace agreement in 2005, some 2 million people have come back to southern Sudan, straining what infrastructure does exist. Approximately 180,000 have returned to the area since October 2010."

But at least now this impoverished country can begin a new chapter, and the forces from the north that exploited and oppressed it will need to leave them alone.

According to the Church of the Brethren, which has had mission workers in the Sudan for years, 95 percent of southern Sudan has been exposed to Christianity and has access to indigenous churches. Our church's reach into these Christian churches is through Mennonite Central Committee. MCC asks us to pray for an open, transparent process to form a new constitution and for an inclusive government that meets the needs of all people. Let's do that.—*ejt*

Pray for an open, transparent process to form a new constitution and for an inclusive government that meets the needs of all people.
—MCC



A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002626 7

AMBS
LIBRARY
LKHART, I

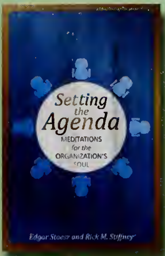
a woman of wisdom and grace

April 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:
- Bodies matter
- Marks of a new creation
- What makes us a church?
- Good schools for everyone
- This whole Mennonite singing thing
- Editorial: We need each other

Resources *for living the faith*


Setting the Agenda
Meditations for the Organization's Soul
Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney

Setting the Agenda

Meditations for the Organization's Soul

Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney

There are a lot of books on personal spirituality, and lots of interest in spirituality in the workplace. But little attention has been given to the spirituality of nonprofit organizations. *Setting the Agenda* fills that gap, offering both a reflection on the meaning, importance and expression of spirituality in a nonprofit setting, and meditations that represent the moods and challenges facing non-profit organizations.

$15.99 USD/$18.50 CAD

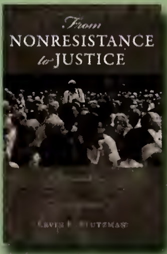
Teaching that Transforms
Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters
John D. R

Teaching That Transforms

Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters

Why send your child to a Christian school? Isn't any school good enough? **John D. Roth** frames key questions regarding the future of Christian education and makes the case for Christian schools, offering clear directions while inviting dialogue and alternative perspectives.

$12.99 USD/$14.99 CAD


From
NONRESISTANCE
to JUSTICE

From Nonresistance to Justice

The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908-2008

Ervin Stutzman shows how the former Mennonite Church, now a part of Mennonite Church USA, moved from an emphasis on nonresistance and nonconformity to engage in advocacy for peace and justice. At the same time, he presses for a greater emphasis on the way that God's activity must guide our work in the world, arguing for a stronger link between God's grace, justice, and peace. Volume 46 in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series.

$39.99 USD/$45.99 CAD

Gather 'Round curriculum

Together
Talkabout Parables & Sayings of Jesus

In the summer quarter, Gather 'Round provides resources for Preschool, Multiage (grades K-5), and Youth/Junior Youth. The Talkabout has discussion ideas for families, commentary on the weekly Bible story, and more. Find worship resources to help coordinate worship with Gather 'Round themes in the summer issue of *Leader* magazine.

New from Kids Can Club

Kids Can Club
Kids Can Build Bridges

Kids Can Be Blessed invites kids to learn how to put the Beatitudes into practice.

Kids Can Build Bridges takes kids on an imaginary trip around the world. As they meet new friends in other places, they'll discover that people everywhere have similarities and differences.

$19.99 USD/$22.99 CAD each

New from Close to Home

Close to Home
Dealing with electronic addiction
with abuse

Dealing with Electronic Addiction

Dealing with Elder Abuse

Two new pamphlets in the Close to Home series help Christian caregivers reach out to those dealing with difficult personal issues.

$.75 USD/$.86 CAD

Canada: 1 800-631-6535 • USA: 1 800-245-7894 • www.mpn.net

Mennonite Publishing Network

TheMennonite April 2011 | Volume 14, Number 4

CONTENTS

12 **A woman of wisdom and grace** —Anna Groff

16 **Bodies matter** —Isaac Villegas

19 **Do you understand what I have done for you?**—Don Clymer

25 **Testing or sharing a 'city of God' moment?** —Leona Dueck Penner

27 **Journey into the dark** —Emily Anne Hedrick

31 **Marks of a new creation** —Sarah Lynne Anderson

37 **MC USA leaders stand against immigration bill**—Everett J. Thomas

38 **Church infringes on gang turf through peace**—Andrew Clouse

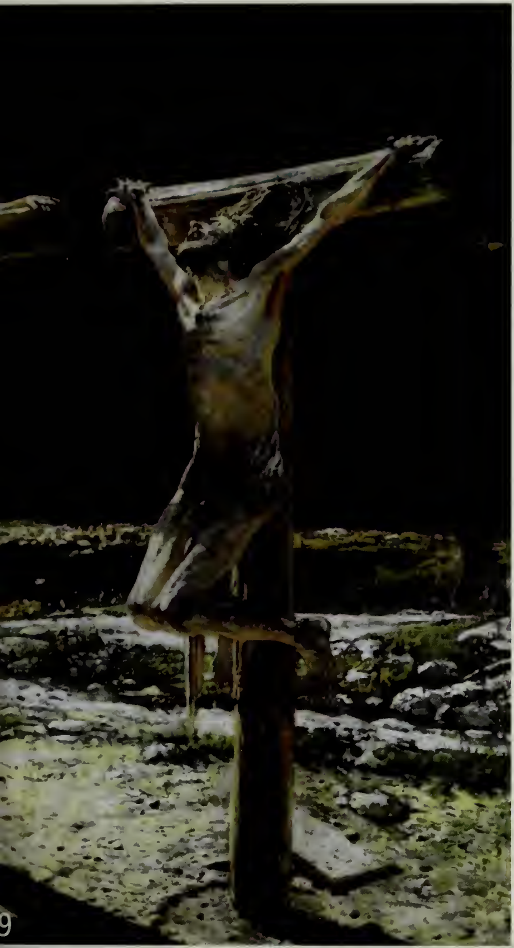
43 **Japanese Mennonites and mission workers OK**—Anna Groff

44 **Groups help each other with convention expenses**—Jessica Farmwald

46 **'Pittsburgh Experiment' may mean few resolutions**—Everett J. Thomas

48 **Price tag of a future: $32,475**—Laurie Oswald Robinson

49 **Indonesians partner with Kenyans**—Debbi DiGennaro



Yo VIVO sin d
38

ON THE COVER: Photo by Anna Marie Groff

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
52 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
April 2011 | Volume 14, Number 4

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016
fax: 574-535-6050

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Church leaders promote injustice

As a Mennonite all my life, I am having difficulty in totally understanding our leaders' position on immigration (see page 37). I have illegal Mexican friends here in my community, but they are what we are saying, illegal. They have broken the laws of this land by coming across the border illegally. I have a great deal of compassion for the disadvantaged, as my life will testify, and I think we need to still be compassionate to these folks in areas in which we live. However, I do not support them being here illegally.

The federal government has failed not only to secure the borders, but they also have failed in wanting to correct this major problem. Some say they are contributing taxes. Go to any hospital and ask them how much they are having to write off each year because of their presence. We as taxpayers are paying for this as our state reimburses these institutions that care for these immigrants. They are using our school systems without paying a dime.

Mennonite Church USA leaders are promoting this unjust system. Why not keep trying to get the federal government to get this problem fixed with legislation that will give the illegals who are already living here some legal status, so they can pay their way? The state of indiana doesn't have the money to pay for health care (and that is what it amounts to) and the other services. We as taxpayers cannot afford higher taxes either. The church is going at this the wrong way, and I will not support their actions.—*Carmen Good, Valparaiso, Ind.*

Better convention locations

Regarding "Phoenix in 2013 But With Satellite Option" (February): We are often reminded, and rightfully so, of our duty as Christians to be good stewards of the resources God has blessed us with. But is it not equally important that our conference also be good stewards of its resources?

By choosing to hold a convention in Arizona, Mennonite Church USA is supporting a state that is not only virulently anti-immigrant but is also anti-union, pro-gun and pro-death penalty. Arizona continues to use the death penalty despite the fact that eight of its death row inmates have been exonerated—an amazing number for such a sparsely populated state.

Surely there are many better choices for locations to hold a convention. The Executive Board really dropped the ball on this important decision.—*Jerry Weaver, Bluffton, Ohio*

Winery in Virginia

Editor's note: This is the third and last issue in which we will publish letters responding to "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January). The following letters are published in the order they were received. Due to space limitation, we can publish only excerpts from the longer letters.

I walked into the local shelter for the homeless one day and was asked by Joan, one of the staff members, if I would accompany her to her office to counsel a man who had expressed a need to talk to someone. Frank had been drinking and been in before to talk about his problems.

We entered the office, and Frank gave me a glare and asked Joan, "Who's he?"

Joan said, "This is Ted," and assured him that I'm OK.

Frank wasn't convinced and asked, "What's he doing here?"

Joan said, "I asked him to come in here. He's a friend of mine from the Mennonite church."

Frank looked at me and asked, "Are you Mennonite?"

I told him I was, and he proceeded to tell me that he once lived in a Mennonite community in Oklahoma. He said, "I was scared to death of those Mennonites, but then I found out that they drink, too."—*Ted Zerger, Salina, Kan.*

I would hope the winery owners never lose someone they love at the hands of a DUI driver who was positive he or she would always stay within the "bounds of self-restraint" when they drink. In spite of the Hartmans' need to have their enterprise "blessed" by pastors and Sunday school, alcohol is still a moral issue. I hope the kids at Eastern Mennonite University don't read *The Mennonite*.—*Rhoda Weaver, New Holland, Pa.*

Like many others, I too was surprised and saddened to see the article on winemaking in *The Mennonite*. Granted, one may not be able to make a strong argument for total abstinence from Scripture. But perhaps a closer look should be taken at 1 Corinthians 6:12: "Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial."

What message does this article send to the many in our congregations who are struggling with alcoholism? Better use could have been made of that space to inform us of important work happening in the church world.—*Dan King, Louisville, Ohio*

Paul wrote in Romans 14:21: "It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that would cause your brother to fall." In the previous verse he had said, "It is wrong for a man to eat (or drink) anything that causes someone else to stumble."

We all fail at times but hopefully come to conviction and repent. I am hopeful that *The Mennonite* will reevaluate the wisdom of printing this article and thereby contributing to others stumbling and even living a life of slavery to alcohol. There are those who will use your words to justify actions that will lead to alcoholism. Surely our church paper can do better.—*Charles H. Gautsche, Archbold, Ohio*

I never thought I'd see the day our denominational paper would present the production and use of alcohol in a favorable light. It is startling because we already know that 10 percent of those who drink will become alcoholics. In fact it is higher now because of the consumption by young people who become alcoholics at a higher rate. It is the second highest cause of death among teens.—*John M. Drescher, Quakertown, Pa.*

No matter where we live, no matter what our cultural background, let's focus first on godly living rather than what was and/or is now socially acceptable. Let's come to the table to talk, share our stories and pray together. —*Joanne Hess Siegrist, Bird In Hand, Pa.*

I understand the concerns of all those dismayed at an article about Mennonite winemakers. But all their responses were about the overuse and abuse of wine. Like all the good gifts of God, such as food and material abundance and sex, wine can be abused and can come to own us. Of all these, the one Jesus warned about most frequently by far was material abundance. The religious folks of Jesus' day accused him of being a wine drinker, which the Gospel writers never refute. In fact his first

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Holy Week is April 17-24. Some congregations observe Maundy Thursday services—which may include foot washing—or a Tenebrae Service. In this issue we include two reflections on foot washing (pages 16 and 19). The poem (page 9) combines the increasing darkness of a tenebrae service and the connection to the Easter lamb.

Darkness of a different kind is the focus of Emily Anne Hedrick's page 27 article: She uses the Mark 5 story of Jesus ministering to the demon-possessed man among the tombs to describe the darkness of depression.

The news section includes coverage of a March 7 press conference in Elkhart, Ind., where leaders from Mennonite Church USA institutions with headquarters in Indiana spoke out against a bill passed by the Indiana Senate that would bring Arizona-style immigration law enforcement (page 37).

Readers who will serve as delegates to the Pittsburgh 2011 convention will want to study the news analysis on pages 46-47. If the Delegate Assembly approves what Mennonite Church USA leaders call a "Pittsburgh Experiment," the next two conventions will include few action items and resolutions to debate.

In this issue, as in February and March, letters from readers speak mostly to a news article we published in January. When a controversy sparks such responses, it has been our practice to publish letters for the three issues afterward. This is the last issue in which we will publish letters about "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia." In this issue we begin publishing a plethora of letters that respond to the February editorial, "Mennonites and Alcohol." Those letters will continue in the May and June issues as well. At the conclusion of those letters we will provide a response.—*Editor*

Mennonites celebrate World Fellowship Sunday

SINGAPORE—Anabaptist congregations around the globe celebrated World Fellowship Sunday Jan. 23 with much color and variation, affirming their common identity around the theme "Serving God together as one family of faith." Most used the worship materials prepared by the Youth Task Force of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and disseminated last October, adapting them to their local needs and resources.

In Honduras, the Mennonite Evangelical Church of La Ceiba spread the focus over two services on Jan. 16 and 23. The Mennonite Church of Singapore celebrated WFS on Feb. 6, on the Chinese New Year weekend. This was the first time the congregation had participated in WFS.

Sermon topics varied regionally. The Singapore church focused on intergenerational integration. Ray Brubacher, former MWC event coordinator, preached at Canada's Breslau Mennonite Church on the "Church as a Glocal (Global-Local) Community."

At India's Bethel Brethren in Christ Church in Orissa, youth, women, pastors and field staff drew on Hebrew 13:1-3 to encourage members of all ages in the church to show compassion to one another.

In Paraguay, a Mennonite and a Mennonite Brethren congregation celebrated together at Asunción's Concordia Church.—*Elina Ciptadi*

VMC training program completes first year

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Early in 2009, Pastor Trung, a Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) leader, shared the church's vision for launching a training program comparable to a bachelor's degree in theology, to train leaders for the Mennonite church and other denominations.

In 2010, VMC ordained 26 pastors and graduated 30 students from a three-year in-service training program.

VMC then agreed to sponsor the new bachelor's degree-level training along with support from Pastor Lim (a Presbyterian from Korea) and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

On March 22, 2010, the first class of 14 Vietnam Mennonite Institute in Theology and Renewal (VMITR) students opened with Bible Survey: Old Testament, taught by Palmer Becker, a retired pastor and former director of pastoral studies at Hesston (Kan.) College.

Gerry Keener taught three courses: Bible Survey: New Testament, Church History: First to 15th Centuries, and The Synoptic Gospels.

Tuyen Nguyen, a Vietnamese Mennonite leader from Philadelphia and a Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishop, taught the Gospel of John. Tom Finger, a retired theology professor from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, taught Church History: Reformation to Present. Qualified teachers from Vietnam and Korea taught other courses. —*Jewel Showalter for EMM*

Fern Clemmer

Across generations

Students Lily Santiago (left), Tim Adams and Ariana Marshall of the New Danville campus of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School enjoy getting to know Willow Valley Retirement Community resident James Robinson as they interview him during a visit to the facility in mid-February.—*LMS*

Church planter ordained

Mauricio Chenlo was ordained Jan. 16 at his home congregation, Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, for his role as denominational minister for church planting. Chenlo resources, coaches and networks church planters and new church initiatives in Mennonite Church USA as shared staff between Executive Board and Mennonite Mission Network.

"We are thankful for [Mauricio's] gifts of insight, vision, imagination, patience and persistence," said Madeline Maldonado, a Mennonite Mission Network board member, "for his pastoral care and attention, and for his abiding commitment to seeking God's reign of shalom."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

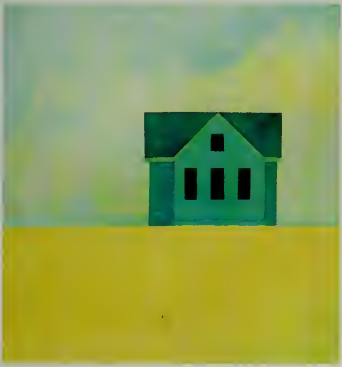
PJSN leaders call for just immigration policy

WASHINGTON—Members of the Mennonite Church USA Peace and Justice Support Network (PJSN) leadership team gathered in a cellar here in February to discuss matters of the state that troubled their understanding of Christian faith.

Two PJSN staff members, Tim Huber and Susan Mark Landis; four PJSN leadership team members, Melonie Buller, Vikki Pruitte-Sorrell, Jim Roynon and Elizabeth Troyer-Miller; the Mennonite Church USA director of holistic witness, André Gingerich Stoner; and two Mennonite Central Committee staff, Saulo Padilla and Tim Seidel; spent Feb. 28 in corridors and offices of Capitol Hill, sharing concerns about immigration policy with 19 federal legislators.

Federal action on immigration has taken a backseat to other issues, as taxes, spending and other budget matters dominate the national debate. This has led some states, including Arizona and Indiana, to adopt or consider laws that require state and local police to enforce immigration laws.

In spite of the current Congress' decreased interest in federal immigration reform, the PJSN leadership team



Courtesy Hesston College

Gingerich displays art at Hesston

Hesston (Kan.) College is hosting an exhibit by graduate and artist Ken Gingerich. "Thin places shine in time and space. Stone hearts dance in cosmic grace" is on display in the Friesen Center for the Visual Arts art gallery until the end of April. The exhibit features acrylic paintings on masonite. At left is Gingerich's painting "Prairie House B."—*Hesston College*

stressed a holistic approach that addresses the need for development abroad, re-evaluates trade agreements that push farmers off their land and contribute to the immigration problem, questions the effectiveness of a border wall and prioritizes the importance of family cohesion.

The 2003 Mennonite Church USA churchwide statement on immigration calls on the church to welcome the stranger and to advocate for just and humane immigration policies with local, state and national elected officials. (See Delegate Actions at www.mennoniteusa.org.)—*Tim Huber*

Bethel to add Chinese language courses

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College will be expanding students' options in cross-cultural learning (CCL) beginning next fall with the addition of Chinese language courses.

The main sponsorship for the initiative comes from an individual donor. In addition to language study opportunities, it will include an interterm travel course to the People's Republic of China.

Lijun Zhu, who since 2009 has taught Mandarin Chinese in Wichita area high schools, will be the instructor for Chinese I and Chinese II.

Zhu is a graduate of Wuhan University with a degree in literature and earned a master of education in foreign language teaching from Central China Normal University. She then came to Pittsburg (Kan.) State University, where she completed a master of science degree in teaching with emphasis on English for speakers of other languages. She taught Chinese in several elementary schools from 2007 to 2009.—*Bethel College*

West African churches strengthen connections with MWC

ACCRA, Ghana—From Feb. 27 to March 1, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) representatives held a three-day workshop in Accra to strengthen connections among the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso, Mennonite Church of Nigeria and Ghana Mennonite Church (which hosted the gathering), as well as between them and churches in other parts of the world.

The gathering was the second of four regional workshops in Africa this year designed to build a continental structure called the MWC Africa Caucus. Composed of MWC member churches in Africa, the body's mandate is to facilitate relationships among Anabaptist churches in the region, further MWC's purposes in Africa and bring African Anabaptist perspectives to the global communion. Over one-third of Anabaptists worldwide are in Africa.

Toss Mukwa, a consultant from Congo, facilitated the workshop sessions with support from MWC staff person Tim Lind. MWC General Secretary Larry Miller, in his first-ever visit to West Africa, led the group in discussions on the history of MWC and its transformation over the years, the MWC constitution, the roles of MWC General Council Delegates and mutual expectations between MWC and its member churches.—*MWC*

Conrad Grebel names seventh president

WATERLOO, Ontario—Conrad Grebel University College has named Susan Schultz Huxman its seventh president, effective July 1. The Board of Governors accepted the unanimous recommendation of the presidential search committee March 10.

Huxman is completing her seventh year as director of the Elliott School of Communication at Wichita (Kan.) State University. She has held various administrative roles at WSU since 1990, balancing these responsibilities with teaching.

Huxman has also won awards and recognition for her teaching while at WSU. She teaches and mentors students in writing, speaking and research-intensive courses. An active scholar in rhetoric, media literacy and corporate communication, Huxman has published two dozen scholarly articles and book chapters. She is co-author with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell of *The Rhetorical Act: Thinking, Speaking, and Writing Critically* (2009). Her dissertation: "In the World But Not of It: Mennonite Rhetoric in World War I as an Enactment of Paradox," has inspired several publications, including a book in progress entitled *Landmark Speeches in U.S. Pacifism.*—*Conrad Grebel*

Sheeplike love

Isaac Villegas is pastor of the Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship

I was first. I took off my shoes and socks and sat down on a chair. Jen was next in line. She knelt down, took my bare foot in her hand and held it over the basin. She picked up the pitcher, poured some water and washed my feet. In turn I washed Dirk's feet. One by one I held his feet in my hands. When finished, I returned to my pew and watched a stream of friends and strangers take their turn at the basin.

The room was silent, except for the constant flow of water—poured over feet, splashing into the metal basin, echoing in a quiet room. I thought to myself, Are these the sights and sounds of a revolution?

I know this may sound like a stretch. Washing feet during a Maundy Thursday service at church doesn't look very radical. Revolutions are usually much noisier—a lot more shouting, broken windows, fires, overturned cars, perhaps some gunshots.

But this revolution came and went without a spectacle. Our foot washing service was a quiet revolution. Jonah, a child from our congregation, lay on a pew and slept through the event.

Some revolutions, writes Michel de Certeau, are "hidden in customs, rites and spatial practices." These revolutionary activities don't make the headlines. Instead, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau describes revolutionary change that doesn't register for those in power —everyday revolutions, a revolution that is "common and silent," an "almost sheeplike subversion." Maybe foot washing—the church's intimate movement of love—qualifies as this kind of common and silent revolution.

There's nothing spectacular about this revolution. It's much too quiet. … It's hard to see how it changes anything. But that's what everyone said about Jesus hanging on the cross.

As you bow down like a humble servant, your body learns the movements of Christ's obedience, which ushers in God's kingdom. This isn't some ethereal or strictly spiritual reality. God's revolution happens when you let someone take your dirty feet in her hands, because with those hands comes Christ's love. These earthly and fleshly movements of love—the overflowing water, the gentle touch of hands and feet—is the caress of Christ's tender love that draws us into the reign of God.

When Jesus gave his disciples the new commandment of love, he also told them how to learn the meaning of love: "So, if I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Foot washing teaches us how to love. "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another," Jesus says (v. 34). When we wash feet, the communion of God's love comes with our hands, with the water, and with the towel. We welcome the gift of God's love with our hands and with our feet.

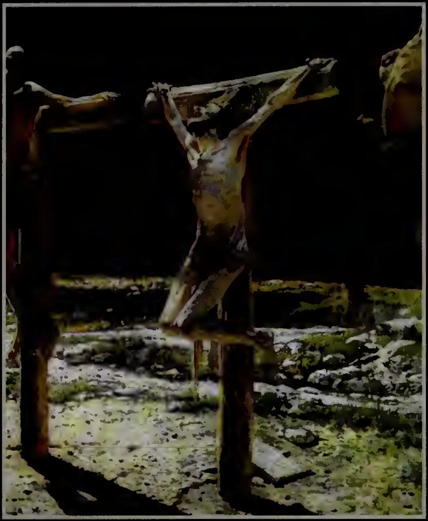
The goal of our revolution is communion, a union of love that breaks through alienation and estrangement. That's why Jesus tells us to start with foot washing—a practice that breaks down walls of self-sufficiency and opens us to receive God's loving care from another.

Jesus didn't tell us to wash our own feet but to wash each other's feet. For in letting someone wash our feet, we draw closer to our fundamental neediness; God's sustaining grace washes over us. When our lives are joined together in mutual dependency, Christ's love permeates our fellowship and "holds [us] together in a knot of unity," as Augustine of Hippo wrote in *On Christian Doctrine*. This union of fellowship is the revolution of Christ's love.

And that's what I saw and felt (and smelled?) at our Maundy Thursday foot washing service—a reunion of bodies, bound together in love. Friends and strangers, bowed down before one another—an act of submission, of care, of love, a gesture of complete humility. We held the lowliest parts of each other's bodies, exposing our clean hands to dirty feet. Our lives were woven together in a knot of unity, a communion of love, our union with God.

Sure, there's nothing spectacular about this revolution. It's much too quiet. Children nap. No one notices. It's hard to see how it changes anything. But that's what everyone said about Jesus hanging on the cross. Little did they know that the slain Lamb ends up ruling the world.

Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur: "Our lamb has conquered; him let us follow." Like de Certeau, we are also looking for sheeplike subversions. TM



Nikolaj Nikolajewitsch (1831–1894) | www.wikimedia.org

Tenebrae

by Joanne Lehman

Our music bleeds close harmonies
stretching into each ancient symbol—
the precious lamb of God, drink and bread,
the substance of our sacred rite.
My throat is loose, pure vowels,
crisp consonants grow bold in these old hymns
gone wild with low chromatic scales,
dissonance held and then resolved.
Tenors match sopranos, depart and blend again.
We are a community of images and sounds—
allusions to a grace we think we know.
Each candle is slowly snuffed;
we hear again the dark and mystic words.

I rise to sing and then recall the
movement of my neighbor's sheep,
the bleating cries of mothers
with their young. How last week I watched
the wobbly gait of small black twins as
they stumbled forward into brownish pastures.
Before our last rehearsal
the new lambs are taken to the auction barn—
for the Easter lamb sale—
(except for the lame one, rolled on by his mother
after his unattended birth in a winter stall).
My neighbor tells it simply, as if her words confer
a remnant of dignity. She, who might hold
mercy like the shreds of hay she offered them,
or pardon in her buckets of grain.
They're Easter lambs, these innocents of hers.
We know the story well, about their blood,
Take it as a sign, taste the bitter herb,
egg and salt, unleavened bread.

Joanne Lehman is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Be careful what drugs you take

Whether you are suffering from some ailment or simply trying to prevent illness, you may want to think twice before accepting the latest drug from your doctor. Take warning from an article in the Jan. 31 issue of *Newsweek* by Sharon Begley, "Why Almost Everything You Hear About Medicine Is Wrong."

"More and more scholars who scrutinize health research," Begley writes, are now making the claim that "wrong answers aren't the exception but the rule." We now have a system, she writes, "that leads patients and physicians astray—spurring often costly regimens that won't help and may even harm you."

She offers many examples. In the last several months, "a major study concluded there is no good evidence that statins (drugs like Lipitor and Crestor) help people with no history of heart disease." The cost of statins is more than $20 billion per year, of which half may be unnecessary.

Last November, she points out, "a panel of the Institute of Medicine concluded that having a blood test for vitamin D is pointless: almost everyone has enough D for bone health … without taking supplements or calcium pills." The cost of vitamin D is $425 million per year.

Those dollar amounts represent huge profits for drug companies and help explain one reason so many unproved remedies are on the market and being promoted.

One person revealing and opposing this trend, according to Begley, is Dr. John Ioannidis, who is the new chief of Stanford University's Prevention Research Center. She calls him "one of medicine's top mythbusters."

While working at the National Institutes of Health, Ioannidis noted that while "positive" and "negative" drug trials take the same amount of time to conduct, negative trials took an extra two to four years to be published. "With billions of dollars on the line," Begley writes, "companies are loath to declare a new drug ineffective. As a result of the lag in publishing negative studies, patients receive a treatment that is actually ineffective."

In a 2005 paper, Ioannidis concluded that biomedical research is riddled with incorrect findings. He has now collaborated with some 1,500 other scientists to run the preventive-medicine center at Stanford.

While some scientists discount Ioannidis' claim that most biomedical research findings are wrong, there have been many once-heralded studies proven wrong. Begley notes some of these: "Two 1993 studies concluded that vitamin E prevents cardiovascular disease; that claim was overturned by more rigorous experiments in 1996 and 2000. A 1996 study concluding that estrogen therapy reduces older women's risk of Alzheimer's was overturned in 2004. Numerous studies concluding that popular antidepressants work by altering brain chemistry have now been contradicted."

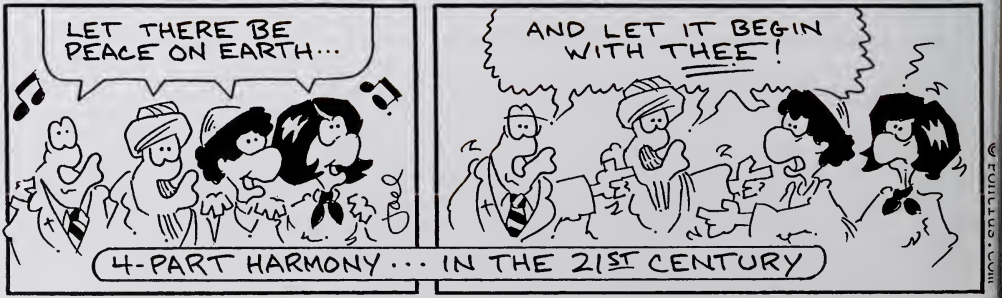
Ioannidis went after the shoddy use of statistics in certain studies, and geneticists, at least, have mostly mended their ways, writes Begley. Others have not. "Surgical practices, for instance, have not been tested to nearly the extent that medications have." One expert estimates that "strictly applying criteria like Ioannidis pushes would save $700 billion to $1 trillion a year in U.S. health-care spending."

Nevertheless, some truths remain, Begley writes: "Smoking kills, being morbidly obese or severely underweight makes you more likely to die before your time, processed meat raises the risk of some cancers and controlling blood pressure reduces the risk of stroke."

Good health to you.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH...
Joel
AND LET IT BEGIN WITH THEE!
4-PART HARMONY ··· IN THE 21ST CENTURY
© Pontius.com

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> “That is straight out of Gandhi. If people are not afraid of the dictatorship, that dictatorship is in big trouble. … If you fight with violence, you are fighting with your enemy’s best weapon, and you may be a brave but dead hero.”

—Gene Sharp, a leading theoretician of nonviolence, whose writings inspired the student movement in Egypt, commenting on their discipline in remaining peaceful and their lack of fear (New York Times)

The power of poetry

Kim Rosen, author of *Saved by a Poem: The Transformed Power of Words*, visited a safe house in Kenya for young Masai women who had run away from home to escape genital mutilation. The girls liked to sing and asked Rosen if she knew any songs. When Rosen said that what she really likes is poetry, the girls asked her to recite a poem. The first poem to come to Rosen’s mind was Mary Oliver’s “The Journey,” a poem about leaving home, which begins: “One day you finally knew / what you had to do.” By the time Rosen was done reciting the poem, she and some of the girls were in tears. One of them asked, “Who is this woman, Mary Oliver? Is she Masai?”—*Christian Century*

Pentecostal churches grow, others decline

While mainline Protestant churches in the United States continue to experience decades-long decline, the memberships of Pentecostal traditions are on the rise, according to new figures compiled by the National Council of Churches. The Roman Catholic Church (No. 1) and the Southern Baptist Convention (No. 2) are still significantly larger than all other North American denominations, but Catholics posted minimal growth of less than 1 percent, and Southern Baptist membership fell for a third straight year, according to the *2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches.—Religion News Service*

First learn Spanish, then Chinese

A quiz: If a person who speaks three languages is trilingual, and one who speaks four languages is quadrilingual, what is someone called who speaks no foreign languages at all? Answer: an American. Yet these days, we’re seeing Americans engaged in a headlong and ambitious rush to learn Chinese—or, more precisely, to get their kids to learn Chinese, writes columnist Nicholas D. Kristof.

Instead, writes Kristof, Americans should be learning Spanish. Hispanics made up 16 percent of America’s population in 2009, but that is forecast to surge to 29 percent by 2050, according to estimates by the Pew Research Center.

As the United States increasingly integrates economically with Latin America, Spanish will become more crucial in our lives. More Americans will take vacations in Latin America, do business in Spanish and eventually retire in countries where the cost of living is far cheaper. *—New York Times*

Growth of U.S. Muslims

The number of Muslims in the United States is projected to rise from 2.6 million, or 0.8 percent of the U.S. population, to 6.2 million, or 1.7 percent in 2030.—*Religion News Service*

Confessing by iPhone not OK

Just in case Catholics are wondering if a new iPhone app might be able to forgive their sins, the Vatican has issued a clarification: No. “One may not speak in any sense of confessing via iPhone,” the Rev. Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office, said in a statement on Feb. 9. *—Religion News Service*

3,458

The number of days the United States has been at war in Afghanistan, as of April 1 (no fooling).—*New York Times*

2010: the worst year ever

Humorist Dave Barry thinks 2010 was the worst year ever. But it had a few bright spots, three to be exact: one, the Yankees didn’t get into the World Series; two, there were several days when Lindsay Lohan wasn’t going into or getting out of rehab; and three, Apple released its much anticipated iPad, which gave iPhone users “something to fondle in their other hand.”—*Washington Post*

Military spending in context

- **The United States spends nearly as much on military power as every other country in the world combined, including more than six times as much as China, the next highest.**
- **The United States maintains troops at more than 560 bases and other sites abroad, many of them a legacy of a world war that ended 65 years ago.**
- **The intelligence community is so vast that more people have “top secret” clearance than live in Washington, D.C.**
- **The United States will spend more on the war in Afghanistan this year, adjusting for inflation, than we spent on the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War combined.—*New York Times***

A woman of wisdom and grace

by Anna Groff

Tina Begay is committed to her Mennonite congregation and to keeping Navajo alive.

Every Sunday at Light of Life Mennonite Church in Farmington, N.M., Ernestine ("Tina") Begay makes sure the congregation sings at least two songs in the Navajo language from one of two Navajo worship books. As a board member, she holds her church to this commitment they made. She also prays in Navajo whenever she serves as worship leader.

Worshiping God in her native language carries significance, and she wants to keep the language alive in her congregation. Born in 1946, Tina grew up in New Mexico in a town called Nageezi, which means "pumpkin" in Navajo. She describes her parents as "traditional Navajos." Her father spoke Navajo, Apache, Spanish and a Pueblo language, Jemez, but unlike her father, Tina experienced harsh discipline when she spoke Navajo. At the Methodist mission boarding school she attended in Farmington, her teachers washed her mouth out with soap until she learned only to speak English. They also cut off her hair, which she had grown out long—an important Navajo tradition. "That made me the saddest," she says.

Tina's four daughters often tell her they wish she had taught them Navajo as they were growing up. In hindsight, Tina says she regrets not making more of an effort, but at the time she thought speaking English at home would give them an advantage in school. Now Tina tries to teach Navajo to her granddaughter Kaili but acknowledges the challenges of maintaining a bilingual household.

Tina says the members of Light of Life Church come from diverse backgrounds: Anglo, Navajo, Zuni, Hispanic, even Greek. In 1993, Ben Stoner, who also directed a Brethren in Christ mission in the area, started Light of Life with some other Mennonite families. They met in homes and rented places to worship, and Ben served as the pastor for about five years. Tina got to know him when she worked on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico at Head Start, a government program that provides services to low-income families and children. She began attending Light of Life regularly in 1996. Light of Life's current pastor, Phil Rosenberger, came to the church about five years ago from Quakertown, Pa. George Wero, a Navajo man who served as interim pastor for several years between pastors, now preaches at least once a month.

Several years ago, Light of Life members struggled when the leadership brought in pow-wow drums to use during the Sunday morning worship services. "Some of our members didn't want drums because they reminded them of life before they became Christian," Tina says. "In Navajo, drums are only used for ceremonial purposes." This issue of drumming in worship drew a division between some of the church members, but over time, healing and understanding occurred, says Tina, although drumming is not used at the church.

Through that experience and others, Tina now spends time contemplating what Navajo traditions she wants to hold on to and what traditions to let go of in light of her faith. "I don't want to keep the extreme traditions that are stumbling blocks," she says. For example, traditionally many Navajos view death as taboo and evil. As an 8-year-old, Tina lost her 23-year-old sister, but her family did not permit her to attend the funeral or say goodbye in any way. After her parents burned her sister's clothing and belongings, Tina sneaked into the ashes and found a pair of earrings she kept and hid from her mother. "People didn't talk about death," she says.

Over time, these attitudes towards death have shifted, due to the influence of missionaries and the financial burden of funerals and burial sites, Tina says. Many families find themselves unable to manage all the funeral costs on their own, so extended family and friends often pitch in with the expenses. The immediate family also invites the supporters to join in the funeral planning. "Times have changed for the good," she says.

At the Methodist mission boarding school she attended in Farmington, her teachers washed her mouth out with soap until she learned only to speak English.

Tina chooses to hold fast to the tradition of Navajo clans and even educates her church on their significance. The Navajo kinship, or clan, system follows the lineage of the Navajo women that began with four original clans. Today more than 140 clans exist. Tina tells her church that the clan system resembles the Christian family, as it connects individuals to one another through faith and offers a large support network. "You always have someone to take you in," she says. Tina also values family stories but steers away from overemphasizing Navajo legends. She told her daughters some legends when they were growing up but wanted them to know they are only stories and not to elevate them too much. "I think it can be really misleading," she says.

Her favorite Navajo tradition to this day remains the celebration of a baby's first laugh. Whoever makes the baby laugh for the first time, usually a parent or sibling, throws a large party as ▶

Tina Begay with granddaughter
Photo by Delcherie Begay

soon as possible. At the celebration, the hosts give gifts to all the guests, instead of them bringing gifts, in order to teach the baby not to become selfish.

Along with traditions, Tina spends much of her time reflecting on and reading about faith and religion. While growing up, she attended a Church of the Brethren congregation with her mother, who held strict views of religion. "God said it, I believe it, that's it," was her mother's motto on faith. But now, Tina says, "that view is too simple. You need to get into it and learn. It's much more fun that way."

Tina spends much of her time reflecting on and reading about faith and religion.

Not long ago, Tina attended a small church on the reservation where she heard a preacher telling his congregation they will become rich if they become Christians. Tina regrets that she chose not to talk with him after the service about the negative implications of this message. "I would have told him that's not what the Bible says. Where did he get his information? I believe in the Lord, but I'm still poor," she says.

In Tina's days as a young mother, she had a lot on her plate as a single mother of five children. Tina met her first husband, a San Carlos Apache man, in San Francisco, where she lived for seven years. She moved to California as part of a Bureau of Indian Affairs educational program, studied to work as a secretary and later worked for the Internal Revenue Service. Tina and her first husband had two children: Brenda, 42, a welder, and Wilson, 44, who has intellectual disabilities and lives in a group home. Tina brings him to Bloomfield, N.M, to visit at least once a month. Tina was married to her first husband for eight years. "He was a traditional believer and an alcoholic," she says. "He also wanted to be near his family in Arizona. We just didn't work out."

Twelve years after her first marriage, she married a Navajo man, and they had three daughters: Alvajeana, 31, Natalyn, 27, and Delcherie, 26. Tina hung on to her marriage for a long time—20 years—but her husband's drinking problem grew to be more than she could handle. In fact, he drank 13 of the 20 years they were together. Ben Stoner told her one day, "Even if you prayed until you were blue in the face, Jonah is not going to change unless he wants to," she remembers.

Ben encouraged her to move on in life and pursue her vocational aspirations. Over the years, Pearl River Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Miss., donated $20,000 to Light of Life's church building fund. The amount came from a tithe from land purchased by the state to build a road, according to Carol Lee Roth, staff leader with Native Mennonite Ministries. Pearl River, part of Native Mennonite Ministries, borders the Choctaw Reservation.—*Anna Groff*

Tina acquired a variety of work experiences. In Denver she worked at a Russell Stover Chocolate Factory for four years. When she returned to New Mexico, she commuted an hour to work in a motel in Durango, Colo., for two years. Then she got a job as a cashier supervisor on the graveyard shift and as an accountant at an Indian casino in Ignacio, Colo., on the Southern Ute reservation. She also drove to Farmington to take classes for her associate degree in early childhood education. Looking back on those days, she says the Lord blessed her family during that time. Tina worked late nights, and her children cared for themselves during that time but never got in any major trouble. In fact, all her daughters graduated from high school with good grades and went on to college.

Tina now lives with her youngest daughter and her granddaughter Kaili in Bloomfield. She is retired and receives $600 a month from Social Security but no funds from the Navajo tribal council. Delcherie, who also serves as board secretary for Light of Life, does receive a stipend and money for her college education from the tribe. In addition to her schooling, Delcherie and her daughter are also involved in the church's AWANA club, which brings in children and families from the area.

Tina remains committed to her church and Mennonite Church USA not only for herself but for her family. She says she was thrilled when her daughters attended the Mennonite Church USA conventions in St. Louis and Nashville and told her happily, "Mom, we're not alone." Tina also helped build the Light of Life church building, which was completed in March 2001. In addition to financial assistance from the denomination, many individuals donated money and volunteered with the construction. Tina says Pearl River Mennonite Church in Mississippi donated $20,000 to the construction of Light of Life. She feels touched by their generosity to this day.

Tina describes her position on Native Mennonite Ministries and the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board as God's blessings to her, but many others would say she blesses those boards with her wisdom and grace. "I'm doing things I never thought I would do—traveling by myself, working in meetings and having my ideas heard by others," she says. However, Tina's road to leadership got off to a rough start. During her first convention, Columbus 2009, Tina felt lost and alone. "I hadn't really ever traveled without my family," she says. "This was the first time I'd been by myself so far away." By Wednesday she felt ready to return to New Mexico but managed to stick out the rest of the week.

> I'm doing things I never thought I would do—traveling by myself, working in meetings and having my ideas heard by others.—Tina Begay

Her next experience at the following Executive Board meeting went much smoother. "It was a learning experience for me. I didn't realize how big Mennonite Church USA is," she says. Now Tina shares from her life experiences and perspectives at the board meetings. She feels strongly about representing the voice of Native Mennonites in this setting and reminding the rest of the church about Native Mennonites. "We're part of the church and we choose to be part of it," she says.

Anna Groff is associate editor of The Mennonite.

Tina's favorites

Favorite Scripture: Psalm 23

Favorite song: "Keep on Believing" by Frank C. Huston, page 64 of *Jesus WoodLaaji Sin*

Favorite food: Navajo tacos. Tina says her healthier version of fry-bread is made with baking powder and flour, and without salt or excess oil.

Favorite book: Books by Max Lucado and the Bible

Hobbies: Facebook and reading about religion and prayer

Jesus teaches us through foot washing that God loves our bodies, and we are to love others' bodies as well.

by Isaac Villegas

Bodies matter

In a quiet office park off Evans Road sits a two-story red-brick building with tinted glass windows and shades. There's no sign outside; no U.S. flag nearby. But some 40 protesters bearing wooden crosses drove there Thursday morning to inform its tenants they know what goes on inside, and they're outraged. The building, at 140 Centrewest Court, is one of many unmarked Immigration and Customs Enforcement field offices where illegal immigrants are detained. … Using familiar civil rights tactics, the protesters sought to bring attention to the building and demand transparency, including a list of the people being detained and access to attorneys and family members for those arrested. … The timing of the protest came during Holy Week on the day Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, prior to his crucifixion.—Yonat Shimron, *The News & Observer*, April 1, 2010. To see the full article, go to www.newsobserver.com/2010/04/01/417012/protesters-hold-demonstration.html

Foot washing is about bodies. Jesus takes the feet of those who gathered with him, those lowliest members of our bodies. He strips down to servant's clothes, takes a basin and pitcher and, bowing down to the ground, he takes each of their feet in his hands, pours water and dries them. Jesus pours out his love for human beings with a pitcher, with this water. For Jesus, bodies matter. He shows his love for us by washing feet, by taking our bodies into his hands. And he commands us to go and do likewise: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

That's why we are here this morning, gathered outside this detention center, witnessing to the love of Christ. "For God so loved the world," and that means everybody. We are gathered to proclaim God's love and to show that love through this worship service. The church, the body of Christ, is brought together through this intimate and holy act of foot washing, where God's love flows with this water. Foot washing binds us together as the body of Christ. Foot washing is about bodies—about the way the love of Jesus makes us care for bodies.

As you can see, there are two chairs behind me. If you want your feet washed, please come forward and sit in this chair, and I will wash your feet. But this other chair up here will remain empty as a sign of all the bodies that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency has hidden from us, the bodies that law enforcement officers have torn from our communities and our families in the middle of the night, the bodies they have ripped away from our churches. By refusing to let us wash the feet of the people hidden in their detention centers, the federal government has dismembered the body of Christ, they have torn apart the church, they have pierced and severed the body of Jesus.

May this service of holy foot washing be a sign of God's love for those bodies who have been torn from us, leaving us wounded, with holes in our sides and in our hands, the dismembered body of Christ.

Jesus shows his love for us by washing feet, by taking our bodies into his hands. And he commands us to go and do likewise.

The protesters, many of whom are Christians, came with a washbasin and several gallons of water. As people chanted Psalms and read Scripture passages, the Rev. Isaac Villegas managed to wash about five people's feet before an unmarked white van rolled in, dispersing the protesters. A handcuffed Hispanic-looking man was then let out of the car and escorted into the building. The protesters quickly hung yellow crime scene tape on the black metal gates in the rear of the building. "By our yellow crime scene tape, we've identified this as a crime scene," said Patrick O'Neill, one of the protesters.—Yonat Shimron, *The News & Observer*, April 1, 2010

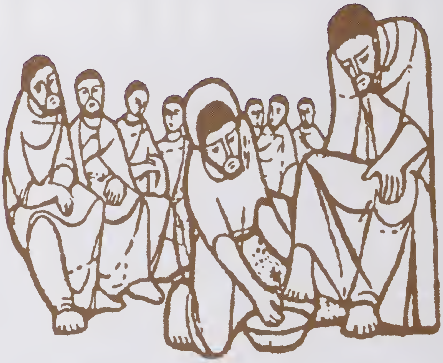
This sermon is titled "Bodies Matter, Part 2" because I preached "Bodies Matter, Part 1" this morning in the town of Cary. Some of us held a foot washing service at a detention center operated by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. I was there trying to wash the feet of the detainees, but they wouldn't let me. Ministers have been refused access to prisoners at the detention centers throughout North Carolina.

But both sermons are about the same thing: that God cares for our bodies, no matter who we are, no matter what we've done, no matter where we're from. The act of foot washing is about how our bodies matter to God; this holy practice is how God's

▶

love flows over us and through us as the water washes over our feet. Listen to these words from the Gospel of John: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and wipe them with the towel that was tied around him" (13:3-5).

Love isn't simply some flighty emotion that comes and goes depending on your mood.



Later in the evening, after Jesus washed their feet, Jesus tells the disciples to go and do likewise: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (v. 34).

This is why in a few minutes you will walk up here and stand in line, waiting your turn to wash feet and have your feet washed. Through this practice we are invited into discovering how our bodies matter to God; foot washing is how God's love flows through us and into one another—through our hands and with the water. As we all know, each foot is ultimately attached to a face, the face of someone we love and someone who loves us—someone God loves. When we wash the feet of one another, we open ourselves to learn what it means to love each other's lives.

This humble service is what love looks like; it's what love feels like—a foot in your hand, a hand on your foot. Love isn't simply some flighty emotion that comes and goes depending on your mood. Love happens when you pour water on someone's foot and wash it and dry it and send that beloved person on his or her way to love and serve God. We can easily wash our own feet. Yet here we wash feet in order to give and receive God's love. Here we learn how to let go of ourselves, to let someone take our bare feet—dirty and vulnerable. And we feel how being loved—receiving love—takes work. Waiting, letting go, becoming vulnerable—all of that is the labor of accepting love. Yet it's holy work because with those hands, with this water, with that bowed body, comes the love of God—Christ's love poured out for the world, poured out for you.

The mystery of God is the love that happens when you let someone take your dirty feet in his or her hands; the mystery of God is the love that happens when you take her or his feet in your hands. That's what love feels like; that's what God feels like. We usually fail, writes Sebastian Moore, "to look forward to the point when the whole mystery of God will be known in the clasp of your brother's [and sister's] hand" (*God Is a New Language* (Newman Press, 1967)).

God is a presence that passes through our lives—a presence who envelops our lives—with sustaining grace. And foot washing gives us a window to see what that grace looks like, to watch God's grace unfold before our eyes. Grace is the way someone takes our feet and washes them. This grace comes to us through bodies that want to serve us, care for us and prepare us to show that same grace to whoever we may encounter as we go about our lives. Through foot washing we are invited to feel how bodies matter to our faith.

Bodies matter, even the bodies of our enemies. The scandalous part of the foot washing story in John's Gospel is that Jesus washes the feet of Judas as well, the betrayer, the one who hands over Jesus' body to be crucified.

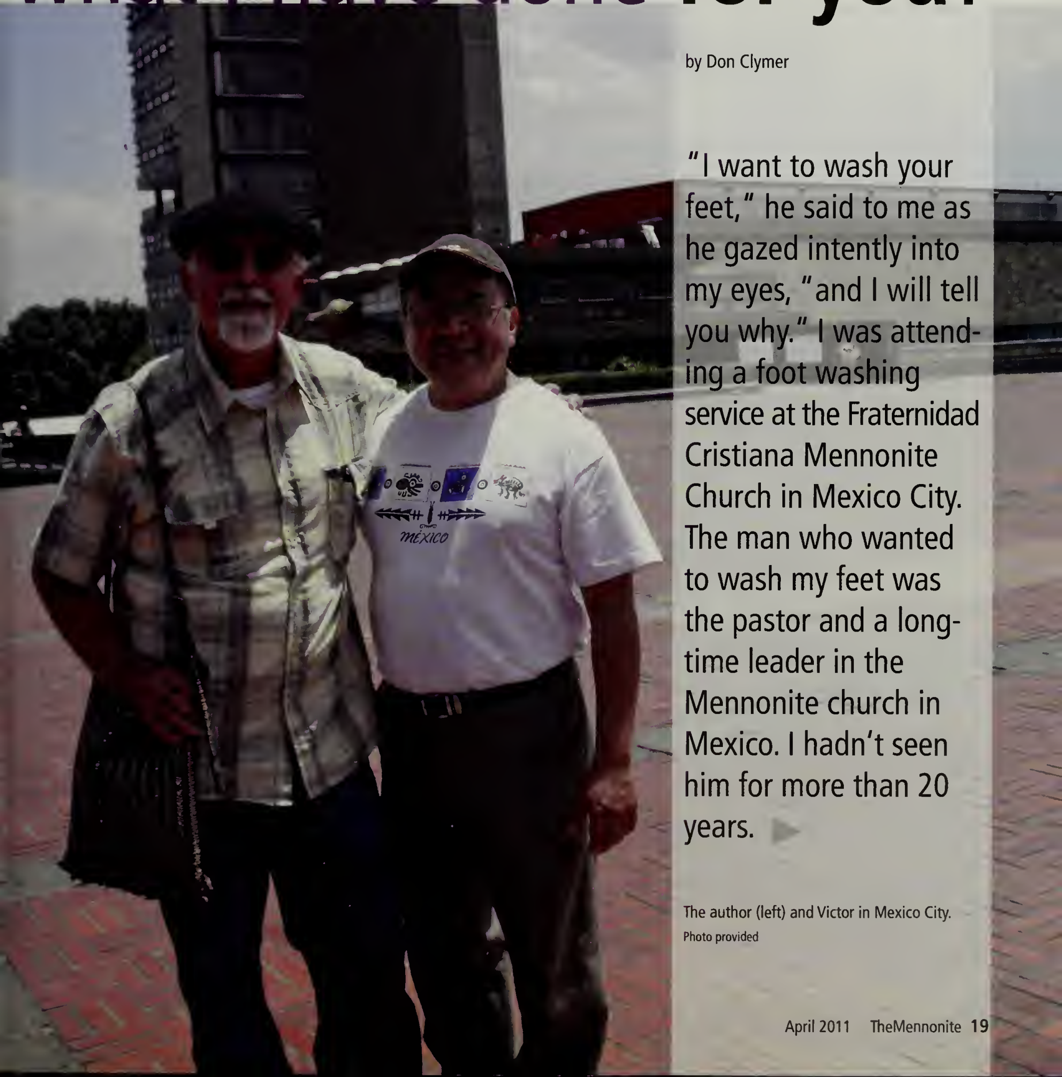
Jesus washes the feet of his enemies. Jesus offers grace to the one he knows will betray him. The love and grace of Jesus knows no boundaries. What would it mean for you to wash the feet of your enemy? What would it mean for his or her body to matter to you?

Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship. This article is an excerpt from the book Presence: Giving and Receiving God *(forthcoming) by Alex Sider and Isaac Villegas, used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers (www.wipfandstock.com).*

Reflections on foot washing

Do you understand what I have done for you?

by Don Clymer



"I want to wash your feet," he said to me as he gazed intently into my eyes, "and I will tell you why." I was attending a foot washing service at the Fraternidad Cristiana Mennonite Church in Mexico City. The man who wanted to wash my feet was the pastor and a long-time leader in the Mennonite church in Mexico. I hadn't seen him for more than 20 years. ▶

The author (left) and Victor in Mexico City.
Photo provided

The practice of washing feet at this church was completely different from the one I was accustomed to. One could wash the feet of more than one person and could wash the feet of a person of the opposite sex. In order to wash someone's feet in that context, however, one had to have a reason and had to explain that reason to the person whose feet one wanted to wash. The ensuing observance of foot washing drew the congregation intimately together in significant ways too often missing in my own experiences of this practice. It modeled what Mark Nation in his article on foot washing identifies as Jesus' intentions for the act: "If Jesus is to create a community of disciples who seriously follow him, they will need to know that intimacy [the act of foot washing] includes cleansing, vulnerability and forgiveness" (see box).

This stooping, bowing and lowering is an act of humility, an act of vulnerability, an act of love.

The foot washing service I experienced in Mexico City did just that. It also made me reflect on Jesus' question to his disciples after he performed this symbolic act: "Do you understand what I have done for you?" (John 13: 12 NIV).

Following their custom, the pastor explained his reason for washing my feet: "Twenty-five years ago, when our country was hurting from a devastating earthquake, you came to our aid," Victor said to me. "We are so grateful that you came to stand in solidarity with us during our time of pain. You embodied the act of service that foot washing represents." He was referring to the fact that my wife and I had volunteered to direct a reconstruction program for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Mexico.

Victor wanted to show his love for me in more than just words. Jesus wanted to do the same for his disciples and did it through a simple act of humility and degradation, foot washing. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love" (John 13:1 NIV). In order to do this, Victor had to stoop over, bow down and lower himself in front of me. Jesus did the same to his disciples. This stooping, bowing and lowering is an act of humility, an act of vulnerability, an act of love. All are essential elements in the kingdom Jesus came to establish.

In Jesus' time, this act was part of showing hospitality to guests. Most of us know that servants or women were usually the ones who washed the feet of the guests when they arrived for a meal. A person of dignity, such as a teacher, a Rabbi or any man for that matter, would never lower himself to wash the filth off what was considered one of the most unclean parts of the body. John Christopher Thomas in his book on foot washing underscores this point: "Those who receive foot washing are always the social superiors of those who render the service" (see box).

This stooping and bowing in humiliation and vulnerability in front of another person are not done easily in our culture. We no longer bow with our whole bodies and kneel to pray in our church services. We barely manage to bow our heads. Whereas foot washing used to be performed as part of the celebration of Communion, it is now relegated to the once-a-year Maundy Thursday service with typically lower attendance than on a Sunday morning. Have we become too dignified to bow? To wash feet? To bow to another to wash their feet shows either total submission with no sense of dignity or total devotion and vulnerability: "In cases of deep love or extreme devotion a host or a loved one might wash the feet of another. Due to its humble nature, the performance of such an act demonstrates tremendous affection, servitude or both" (Thomas).

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" Jesus asks. He showed his devotion, his love to his disciples through stooping to wash their feet. He had to stoop and make himself vulnerable to do so. Victor did the same for me.

Victor continued his reason for wanting to wash my feet. "I want to confess," he said unflinchingly as he looked in my eyes, "that I have too often had a bad attitude toward my American brothers and sisters. Would you please forgive me for that attitude and be my brother." By now I could not hold back the tears. His confession outlined years of misunderstandings between mission organiza-

tions and national leaders. I myself had participated in a number of such misunderstandings. Because I controlled many resources during the earthquake reconstruction, I had too often been the servant who tried to be "greater than his master" (John 13: 16).

After he lovingly washed my feet, it was my turn. "First, I want to thank you and your congregation for hosting our students in spite of some initial misgivings," I said. I was referring to the fact that his congregation was hosting a group of 18 students from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) during Holy Week. I had echoed his gratitude. Now it was my chance to address his appeal for forgiveness. "I forgive you," I said. "But I need forgiveness, too. I confess that I, along with many of my compatriots, have acted in arrogant ways, using our wealth and white privilege to try to exert our control and influence over the church in Mexico. Would you forgive us for our arrogance?" He nodded his forgiveness, and I washed his feet.

Victor and I embodied another of the essential elements for the kingdom of God, as identified by Nation. We forgave each other. Asking for forgiveness is not easily done in our culture or in many others. Most cultures have developed intricate ways to save face, to keep from admitting one's failures, to keep one from feeling vulnerable and humble. The posture of servitude while bowing before another to wash their feet produces the necessary vulnerability to allow confession and forgiveness to take place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" Jesus asks. He opened the door for forgiveness to happen within his community of disciples when he said, " 'and you are clean, though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean" (John 13:10b, 11). Unfortunately, it didn't happen. He showed vulnerability by stooping to wash his disciples' feet, allowing the possibility of forgiveness. Victor did the same for me.

After Victor and I washed each other's feet, we stood up and embraced each other firmly. "I love you, brother," I told him. "I love you, too," he said. I felt elated. Seldom had I felt such a sense of brotherhood, forgiveness, love. This sense of love transcended national, ethnic, cultural and language barriers. I felt cleansed, washed, clean. Indeed, we embodied the "cleansing" Nation wrote about.

Cleansing usually involves water. The obvious medium for cleansing in the foot washing ceremony is the water in the basin, which cleaned our feet in spite of the fact that they were not very dirty. Tears are also a cleansing medium. Tears of joy and forgiveness flowed freely in our encounter with the act of washing feet. Nation further clarifies the point: "We need this cleansing, this washing, not only once at our baptism but repeatedly. As Jesus is lovingly present with us, we need his cleansing, we need his washing of the filth that threatens to define our lives" (Nation).

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" Jesus asks. By stooping in vulnerability and humility and washing his disciples' feet, he offered cleansing not only for the body but also for the soul. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13: 14-15 NIV). Victor did this for me.

Seldom had I felt such a sense of brotherhood, forgiveness, love. This sense of love transcended national, ethnic, cultural and language barriers.

I came away from that foot washing service in a small, struggling Mennonite congregation in Mexico City with a little better understanding of what Jesus had done for me.

Don Clymer teaches Spanish and humanities at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and leads semester-long cross-cultural seminars to Guatemala and Mexico. He is a member of Lindale (Va.) Mennonite Church.

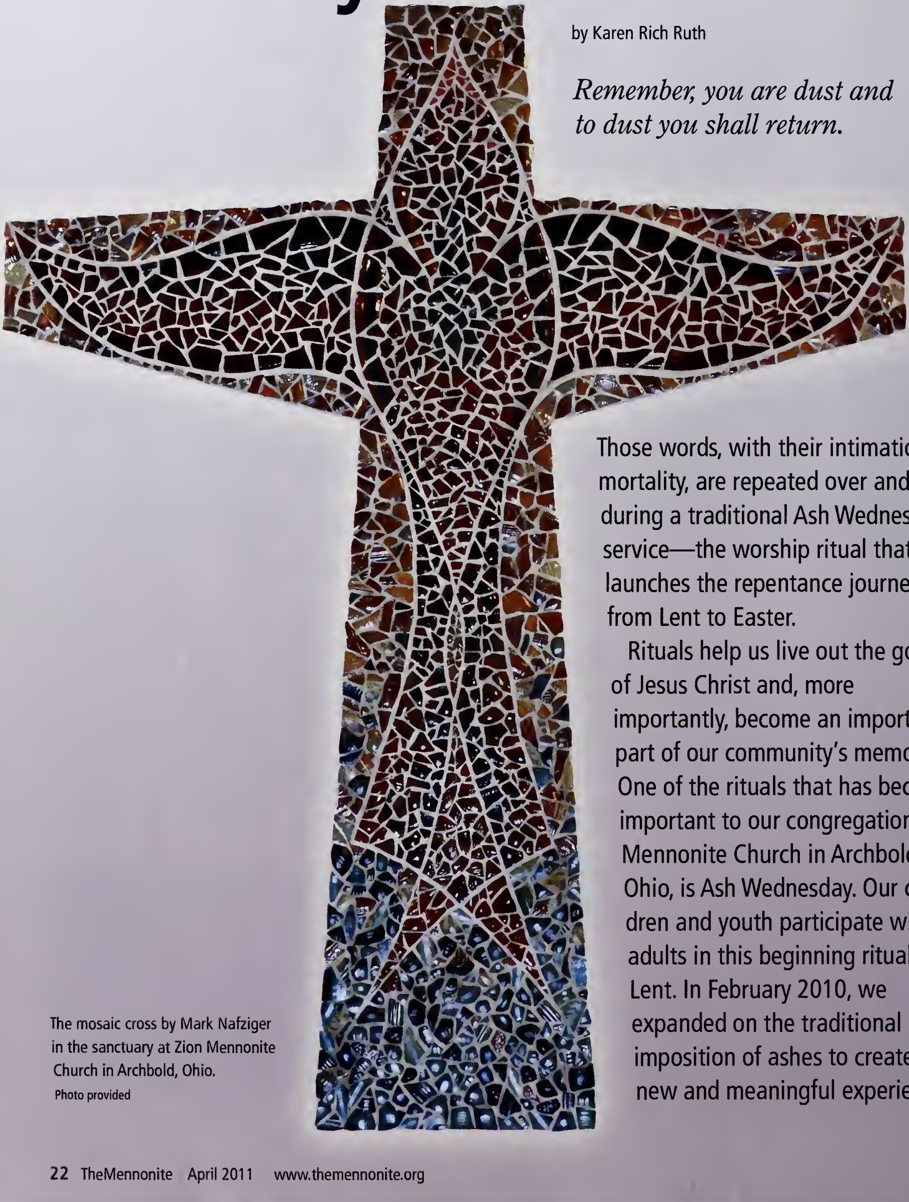
Works cited

"Washing Feet: Preparation for Service" by Mark Nation in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, edited by Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (2004)

"Foot washing in John 13 and the Johannine Community" by John Christopher Thomas in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series* (JSOT Press, 1991)

A new ritual of Ash Wednesday at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio

Journey to the cross



by Karen Rich Ruth

Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return.

Those words, with their intimation of mortality, are repeated over and over during a traditional Ash Wednesday service—the worship ritual that launches the repentance journey from Lent to Easter.

Rituals help us live out the gospel of Jesus Christ and, more importantly, become an important part of our community's memory. One of the rituals that has become important to our congregation, Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is Ash Wednesday. Our children and youth participate with the adults in this beginning ritual of Lent. In February 2010, we expanded on the traditional imposition of ashes to create a new and meaningful experience.

The mosaic cross by Mark Nafziger in the sanctuary at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.
Photo provided

The Lenten planning committee—Cliff Brubaker, Mark Nafziger and I—chose to use the suggested theme "Holding On/Letting Go" from *Leader* magazine. Cliff had just joined the staff at Zion as an interim pastor, but he quickly found he was working with a planning committee that was not content to go with a simple theme but needed to expand and create its own slant to it.

Cliff, who had served at several churches as a transitional and interim pastor, had participated in and observed Ash Wednesday services but had not led one. This also happened to be the first service he led at Zion.

Mark, a self-employed potter and owner of Brush Creek Pottery at Sauder Village in Archbold, added the drama and visual elements to the planning. "Because of my profession, some of my favorite passages in the Bible are about clay and potters," he says.

Mark was intrigued with the idea of persistence and failure. "When you make pots, your failures are physical and always there to remind you of the work you've put into them. Over the years I had accumulated many reject pots. Something in the human spirit makes us keep trying to do better—to make something out of failure. What could I do to transform these flawed pots into something beautiful?"

Mark had been thinking about this for years before he approached the pastors and me with his idea about doing something with these pots during Lent. But things clicked when he heard about the "Holding On/Letting Go" theme for Lent.

As people arrived at the Ash Wednesday service, they encountered several tables of mugs, bowls and other small pots that Mark had created. Several young people directed each person to take a pot into the sanctuary with them. People took their time looking at each pot and carefully chose the ones they liked best.

To the uneducated, unprofessional observers, these pots looked fine—functional and beautiful. However, they were flawed seconds that Mark didn't want to sell. In the sanctuary, the Communion table in front held several large, highly decorated and beautifully displayed plates, vases and jars created by Mark. From a distance, they also looked flawless.

Cliff began the service by introducing the theme of holding on to the things that matter the most—our relationship with and our need for God—and letting go of the things that we tend to hold onto: our fears, our possessions, our sins.

After his introductory comments and prayer, Cliff picked up one of the large pots from the table and without warning the congregation, dropped it into a barrel and shattered it. (A cement block in the bottom of the barrel ensured it would shatter.) Six different people came up front to read a confession and then break another of the large pieces in the barrel. It soon dawned on the congregation that the pots they held in their hands and had so carefully chosen would also be broken.

Cliff says: "As I watched Mark set out all the pots, I thought about how much I loved and appreciated his craft. I knew what we were going to do, and it almost made me angry." Mark took Cliff down the table and told him the stories of some of the pots and what went wrong with them. "We can't break these beautiful pots," Cliff said. "How many hours are in these pots, Mark?"

Many in the congregation found it difficult to break something functional that they could have taken home to use.

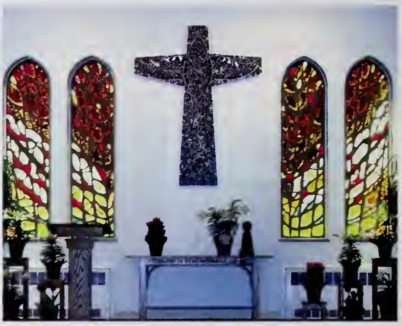
Mark said: "You can't think about that. I got rid of my attachment to these pots a long time ago. They didn't meet my standards. They fell short of my expectations."

Cliff broke a pot before the service began to test it. "I remember trying to balance the emotions of the moment and the drama of it all," he says, "not wanting to overdramatize it so that it took away from the meaning."

As Cliff broke that first pot during the service, an audible gasp came from the congregation. As the readers broke their pieces, many of them grimaced. Then Cliff invited the congregation to come forward to let go of their pots and receive the ashes of repentance on their foreheads or their hands.

Some people let go by throwing their pots onto the cement block. Others gingerly dropped theirs, hoping they wouldn't break. Many in the congregation found it difficult to break something functional that they could have taken home to use. The sounds of pottery breaking over and over became gut-wrenching.

Mark found the experience much more difficult than he had anticipated. "Watching people's expressions and hearing the sounds affected me deeply," he says. "I watched the expectations and hopes I had for these pieces being broken. When the people in the congregation let go of their pots, they were experiencing a letting go of something they physically held for only a few minutes. For



The mosaic cross in the sanctuary at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Photo provided

> We broke all those pots, and Mark put them all back together, like Christ puts the broken pieces of our lives together. —Karen Ringenberg

me, it was letting go of a lot of time and effort—almost letting go of pieces of myself. I went into it only thinking about how it would create a neat effect, but it became much more."

"We were acting out and living a parable," says Cliff, "and we were beginning a journey with no outcome assured. We didn't know where this would end up, but we were willing to go."

Mark says that "one of the readers who broke one of the large pots was my friend Carl Yoder. Carl always held a genuine interest and appreciation for my work. He always tried to come to my shows and would occasionally buy my pots, so it was difficult for him to intentionally break one of them. But it turned out to be moving for him. And since then, the congregation experienced another form of letting go when Carl died [last] October."

The journey through Lent began with a barrel full of broken pottery. We moved the barrel up onto the altar, and in a series of skits we added to the trash pile. Every Sunday morning service opened with a skit taking place in Mark's pottery shop. On that first Sunday of Lent, Mark explained to Jeremiah and his family about the clay he uses to make pots—that certain kinds of clay add different elements to the work.

In subsequent skits, Jeremiah and his friend Baruch visited the pottery shop, and each Sunday a different lesson used the process as metaphor. For example, one Sunday Mark formed a vase on his potter's wheel as the children watched and then smashed it because it did not meet his expectations and needed to be reshaped.

We laughed during the skits and learned about the art of making pots, but we also thought about God's invitation to us to continually improve and remake our lives. The pile of trash continued to grow until the barrels were overflowing with empty clay bags, dry clay and broken pottery. On Palm Sunday, Mark enlisted Jeremiah and Baruch to help clean up the mess and haul all the trash out of the sanctuary in preparation for laying palms.

During Lent, Mark tried to figure out what to do with all the pottery shards in the barrel and how to turn them into a meaningful reminder of our experience. As he developed the concept of making a mosaic cross, he remembered some drawings he had done once for a banner. He pulled out the drawings—a design of two overlapping doves that form a third dove—and adapted the drawing into a cross. He spent about three weeks making the five-foot-tall mosaic cross.

At the outdoor Easter sunrise service, the youth group passed out some of the pottery shards as mementos of the experience. The congregation knew nothing about Mark's project until later that morning, when they arrived at church to see the cross hanging on the wall at the front of the sanctuary.

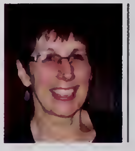
During a children's story in the worship service, Bonnie Stuckey told the children about how the cross came to be. For his sermon that day, Cliff told Walter Wangerin's story "The Ragman," an allegory about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The story tells of a man who takes on all the pain and sadness of the people he meets by exchanging the clean new garments he wears for their soiled bloody rags, until he becomes so burdened and weak he dies. Two days later, he reappears in shining rags but with the scars of the others still visible.

Every person at Zion brings something different to the cross, which now lives permanently in the front of the sanctuary. When Karen Ringenberg sees the cross, she thinks about that night "we broke all those pots, and Mark put them all back together, like Christ puts the broken pieces of our lives together."

For Barbara Bowman, the cross "feels like a part of us because we were part of the pieces of the cross. It represents our community—the different shapes, sizes, pieces of ourselves that come together to make a whole."

The mosaic cross reminds us every Sunday that God transforms our brokenness into something beautiful when we let go of ourselves and hold on to God.



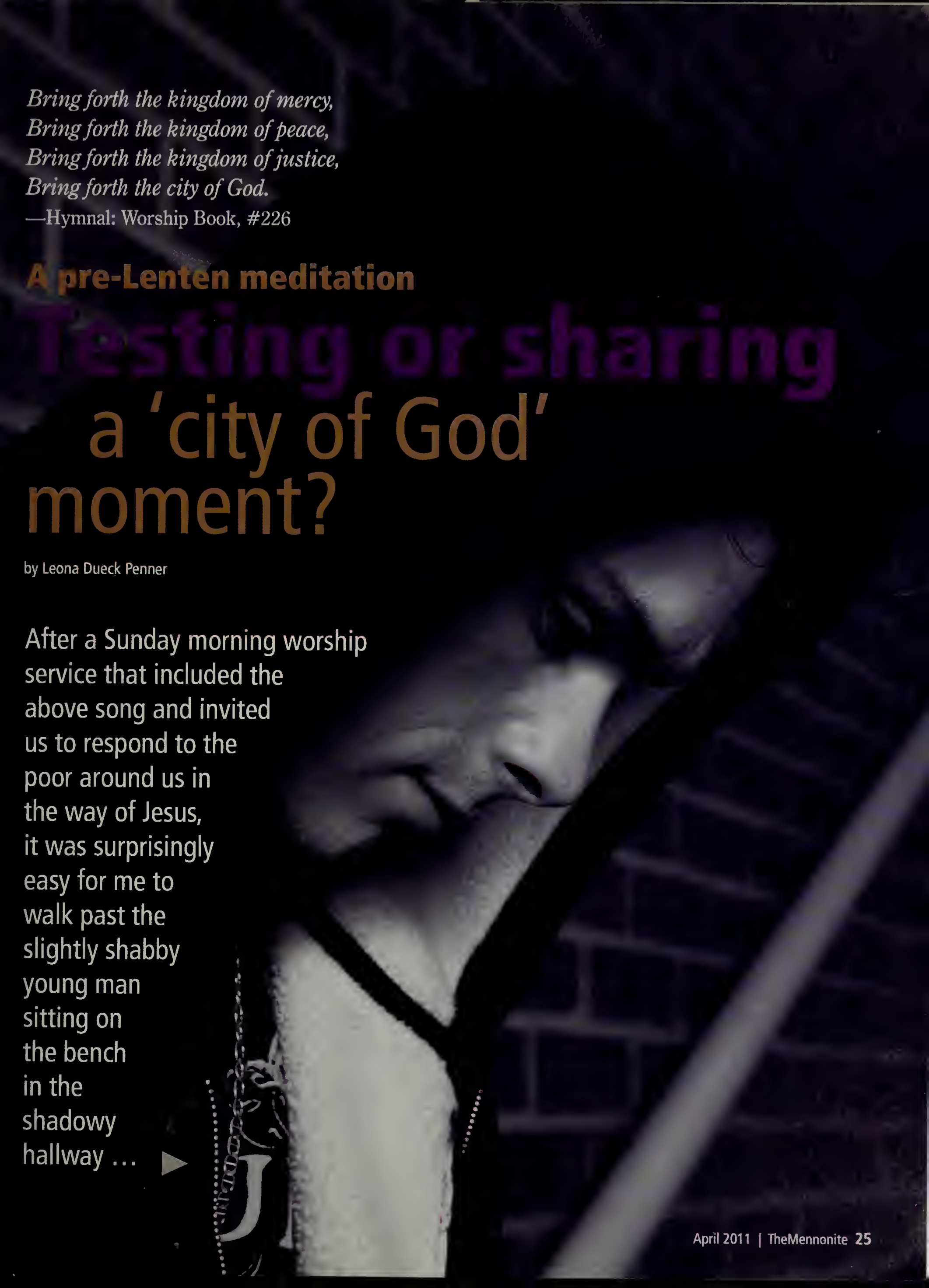
Karen Rich Ruth chairs the worship commission at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Bring forth the kingdom of mercy,
Bring forth the kingdom of peace,
Bring forth the kingdom of justice,
Bring forth the city of God.
—Hymnal: Worship Book, #226

A pre-Lenten meditation

Testing or sharing a 'city of God' moment?

by Leona Dueck Penner



After a Sunday morning worship service that included the above song and invited us to respond to the poor around us in the way of Jesus, it was surprisingly easy for me to walk past the slightly shabby young man sitting on the bench in the shadowy hallway … ▶

leading from our meeting place in the gym, past the Lutheran sanctuary (where the service was still in progress), to the pastor's office, where I was intent on picking up Lenten resource materials.

Just another "stray person" off the street in Winnipeg, Manitoba's North End, briefly sharing our worship space, hoodie-covered head bowed, body leaning forward, no eye contact necessary, probably hungover from alcohol or drugs, catching a bit of churchly warmth on a cold February morning, after a visit to the men's washroom in the church.

Nothing new in that when you worship in an inner-city setting as we had recently begun to do again after a decade elsewhere.

I hurried past him, accomplished my brief errand, locked the door with worship materials in hand, turned around, and there he was, standing right in front me. A tall dark figure, illumined by the bright winter sunshine streaming through the high window behind him. Long black hair framing a wind-weathered but still youthful face. Eyes downcast.

> I remembered that young man and wondered if this experience had been a "test" for me and whether I could have responded better.

Startled, my heart skipped a beat as he moved closer, his left hand jerking toward the inside of his open ski-jacket, while news clips of recent random shootings in the area flitted through my mind.

"I'm wondering if you could help me," he began, speaking softly and hesitantly, still looking downward. "It's cold outside and—"

Ah, I thought with relief. He just wants a handout, already planning my response to the familiar "spiel."

But his next words surprised me.

"It's hard to zip up this jacket with one hand," he said, still gesturing toward his jacket, which I now noticed had a half-empty sleeve on the right side. "If you could just get the zipper started, then I can do the rest."

"Sure," I said, laying down my sheaf of Lenten resources as I stepped closer to him, feeling a bit nervous and wishing I had brought my glasses as I fumbled awkwardly with the mechanics of inserting the zipper pin into the little slider box on his black ski-jacket from a frontal position. "I've never been very good at this," I murmured with a laugh, suddenly remembering how I used to struggle with the zippers on my own sons' parkas when they were little.

Then, as the zipper caught hold at last and the coils slipped together smoothly as I pulled the slide tab almost up to his chin, we looked at each other and smiled. And I noted his eyes were brown and clear. No scent of alcohol anywhere.

"That will feel a lot warmer now," he said as he finished the job, tucked in his scarf, and both of us continued on our way, pleased by this brief and mutually satisfying human encounter in our church entrance.

Almost like a "city of God" moment, right in the heart of a city where poverty, violence and racism abound, I thought, humming the above song as I walked back to the gym to participate in our monthly fellowship meal.

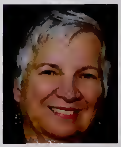
Some time later, as I read the "Shaped by Testing" Lenten materials, based on Jesus' temptation in the desert, I remembered that young man again and wondered if this experience had been a "test" for me and whether I could have responded better.

For a start, I shouldn't have assumed he was hungover just because of the way he was sitting. Perhaps his bowed-over posture meant he was praying along with Lutherans. And shouldn't I have gone the second mile? Offered him some cash, for clearly, he could have used it. Or even invited him to join our congregation in our fellowship meal?

But it didn't occur to me at the time.

And on second thought, perhaps it was better the way it was, to simply respond to his specific spoken need as Jesus tended to do, rather than assuming, from a have and have-not position, that he needed more from me or that I had more to give.

After all, as Jesus told the tempter, "one does not live by bread alone."



Leona Dueck Penner is a member of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Journey into the dark

A reflection on Mark 5:1-15

by Emily Anne Hedrick

Perhaps we should
learn to venture
into the dark places
so that people
will know
they're not alone. ▶

When I was little, I was scared of the dark. There were many reasons for this. First, who knows what could be hiding in the dark? I knew that monsters lived in my basement. I also knew they loved the dark, and when the lights were off, it was only a matter of time until they came to get me. Second, the world changes when you turn out the lights. All of a sudden everything has different colors, darker colors, scarier colors.

As we turn into adults, we get to the place where the dark isn't so scary anymore—at least not the kind of darkness we were scared of as kids. But there's another kind of darkness that shows up. It's the darkness that comes from those parts of our world we don't like, the things that scare us, the things we don't understand. So we pretend they don't exist. Things like war and poverty, depression, doubt, disbelief, rejection, immorality and corruption.

Jesus will go on the journey in the dark to meet you where you are to give you hope.

As Christians, we often find ourselves scared of the dark. We already have all the light we need in our lives provided for us by our faith in God and our desire to follow Jesus. If we venture into the dark, we may lose our light, and then what would we do? Why would we bother going into the dark if we have this light?

We can cling to the light all we want, but the dark will still exist and it will still be a part of our lives and other peoples' lives, a part of our journeys. If we want to bring the presence of Jesus into peoples' lives, we have to acknowledge the dark. Instead of trying to restrain or get rid of the dark in the world and other people, perhaps we should learn to venture into the dark places so that people will know they're not alone.

Mark 5:1-15 is a story about a journey into the dark. Before this point, Jesus' ministry included lots of healing and teaching, a few incidents with demons and a fair amount of calling for disciples—all in Jewish territory. Then evening comes, and Jesus says to his disciples, "Let's take a trip across the lake."

Up until this point, Jesus and his disciples had been hanging out with Jews, but the shore they were heading for on the other side of the lake was a Gentile shore, a place of unclean people with unclean practices and unclean livestock, evidenced by the herd of pigs mentioned in our text. For the disciples, this is a place of darkness. This is somewhere they do not want to be at all.

But that's not the end of it. Jesus and his disciples arrived on the shore of this Gentile town in the dead of night, and the people of Jesus' culture believed that evil spirits were stronger and up to more mischief at night. The general belief was that it was not a good idea to go out at night. If you do have to go out at night, just make sure you stay away from woods, gardens, vineyards and especially desolate places and tombs. These are apparently the favorite haunts of demons.

Where do Jesus and his disciples end up? Right outside a cemetery.

Picture this: You're a disciple, you've just come to land after experiencing a terrifying storm. It's dark outside, really dark. You know that evil spirits are lurking everywhere in the dark. You're already a little confused as to why Jesus decided to bring the whole group to the other side of the lake. You're in Gentile territory. You wouldn't want to be there in the day, let alone in the night.

As you step out of the boat, you get an eerie feeling. You shouldn't be here. You see a series of caves known to hold the tombs of dead soldiers. It is rumored that the ghosts of the soldiers haunt these hills. You can picture the ghosts roaming the caves, tormenting any living human being that crosses their path.

Terrifying? Yes. Dark? I'd say so. Suddenly a crazy, demon-possessed man comes running out of the tombs, straight at Jesus.

The rest of this story isn't so shocking. Jesus has healed demons. He can calm an angry sea. Calming the soul of this man won't be a problem.

But why did Jesus take this journey into the dark? Why would he bother going to the creepy tombs in the first place? What is the point of Mark including this story in his Gospel? Healing demon-possessed people is not a new thing for Jesus. He doesn't have to cross the lake of Galilee to a creepy set of caves and hang out with the Gentiles to make that happen. Why did he bother?

One reason might be that Mark wanted his Roman, Gentile readers to know that Jesus desired his message of hope and freedom to spread to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. When the previously demon-possessed man asked to come back with Jesus, Jesus sent him out into the Ten Towns to tell his story instead. What a great way to bring hope to the Gentiles!

The second is that this was a wonderful way for Jesus to help his disciples conquer their fear of the dark. This is a great way for Jesus to say, "I'm stronger than that. You don't need to be afraid."

I'd like to put a word in for the man of the tombs. There's something so incredibly human about the pain and torment this man was going through that I cannot help but empathize with him. In comparison to the other demon-possessed individuals we've met so far in his Gospel, Mark gives a personal, heart-wrenching description of this man's life:

"This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones."

This is a physical description of how I felt emotionally as I struggled with depression one year in college. All of a sudden, it was as if someone turned the lights off. My world became darker, and often a legion of thoughts plunged me into deeper torment and pain. I isolated myself in my room and often felt bound by religious chains thrust upon me by some of the Christians I knew. It often seemed the place I was at wasn't valid. I couldn't be sad or upset because God loved me, and if I couldn't feel that love, something was wrong with me. It felt like I needed to make a journey I wasn't strong enough to make to get to Jesus.

There is hope in this story in Mark for people in that kind of darkness. It is OK to be where you are. You don't need to fix yourself. Jesus took a journey in the dark of night and crossed storm-infested waters to get to a Gentile town, to arrive at an unclean cemetery full of scary evil spirits that were stronger at nighttime, to interact with a man even the unclean Gentiles chained up and left behind. Jesus will go on the journey in the dark to meet you where you are to give you hope.

But what of those in the light? What of the church, "the body of Christ"? Are you willing to go on the journey into the dark to give people hope? Or will you be like the people of the town, protecting your light so defensively that you end up flinging chains in the direction of anything dark that crosses your path? How can we choose the journey into the dark instead of the chains that isolate us from our fellow humans and ourselves?

There is more than one type of darkness, more than one journey and more than one type of chain. There are three types of darkness that show up in the story of the man of the tombs: emotional (his legion of evil spirits), social (the fact that he was a Gentile) and physical (the nighttime and the cemetery he inhabited).

Emotional darkness is probably one of the scariest forms of darkness and one of the hardest to deal with. It's a darkness inside of us and takes over our world in such a way that our reality shifts. From my experiences with emotional darkness, I've observed that if you venture far enough into its depths, the darkness becomes real. God doesn't exist. Evil becomes stronger. The darkness overpowers the light.

How can you minister to someone in a world that is so dead? How can you keep from shackling them with concepts of God's love and the hope we have for the world?

Who are the Gentiles in our Mennonite culture? Who do we try to distance ourselves from?

Emotional shackles occur when we say, "I don't want to understand your pain because I don't want to experience it. What if I go so far into the dark with you that I can't come back?" Then we cling to the light we have and refuse to let it go.

It's important to validate people where they are, and sometimes we're too busy being Christians and spreading the good news of how God loves us and wants to be in a relationship with us to actually be in a relationship with other people. How do you minister to someone in emotional darkness? Ask her her name. Ask her what her story is. Let her know it's OK for her to be there, that her feelings are legitimate.

Part of being able to do that is admitting to yourself that you have darkness within you as well, that it is real and that it's part of being human. We've all had experiences in the dark. While those times are not pleasant, they are real, and they are necessary in our lives. We need to be willing to embrace those darker experiences.

The day I began my journey out of my emotional darkness was when, in a state of depression, I walked all the way over to the fitness center at school to try to exercise out my emotional pain, only to find that it was closed. The effort it took me to get out of my room and actually make that journey across campus weakened me to the point where I couldn't hide myself as well as I normally did, so I unexpectedly wandered into a close friends' dorm room and burst into tears. It was the first time I had ever let anyone be with me when I was in that state. Having her there, telling me it was OK for me to be upset and letting me cry was my first step to healing, and that wouldn't have happened if I didn't know from my previous relationship with her that she would be a safe person to turn to.

We need to learn how to build relationships instead of chains.

Social darkness is a bit more subtle and trickier to handle. Who are the Gentiles in our Mennonite culture? Who do we try to distance ourselves from? Who are we repulsed by? Who isn't allowed? The first group of people that comes to my mind is people of different sexual orientation. This is a relevant issue for our denomination right now as we try to figure out how best to respond to the rising number of openly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals in our world. It's controversial; it makes people uncomfortable; a lot of us would like to pretend this issue doesn't exist. That sounds to me like social darkness. Regardless of our beliefs about this issue, how can we spread the message of God's love to these fellow human beings walking this journey of life with us? Too often people respond to social darkness by pulling out their shackles, saying, "I don't want to understand you. I don't want to know your stories. I don't want to be associated with you. Stay away from me. You scare me, and I don't want to be anywhere close to where you are." Instead, we should be saying, "You are a valuable human being, and I want to get to know you. You are unique, and I want to know your story. Let's be friends."

Homosexuals are not the only group of people from whom we separate ourselves. As a religious group, we are often scared of people from other religions. Are we willing to create relationships with the growing Muslim population in our country?

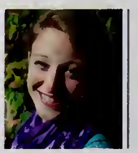
Or even closer to home, will you adults create relationships with the younger generation in your congregation? Youth, are you willing to consider becoming friends with the adults?

Many things separate us from each other. We get scared when we don't know what to expect. We like to have control over our experiences.

Lastly is this realm of physical darkness—danger, poverty, war, pain, disease. When we stand back and pity those in physical darkness, we are saying, I'm glad I'm not you. Instead of pity, we need to take that journey into the dark to be with them. Father Damien, a catholic priest, traveled to one of the Hawaiian islands called Molokai in 1864 to live with a leper colony that had been quarantined and isolated from the rest of the civilized world. He could've kept them at arm's length, certain not to catch their disease, but he realized that to communicate God's love to them he needed to live as a part of their community. After 16 years of ministering to the emotional, spiritual and physical needs of this leper colony, Father Damien joined them more fully in their darkness. He contracted the disease and died of it. He is revered as a saint in the Catholic Church, and his ministry of love to the physical outcasts of society is still honored today.

Instead of being afraid of the dark, we as Christians are called to embrace it, to journey to the places no one else wants to go so that we can give people hope. Just as Jesus took the journey into the dark to reach the man of the tombs, so should we be willing to take journeys into the emotional, social and physical darkness of our world to spread God's love to people who need it. We need to learn how to build relationships instead of chains, validating people for who they are and where they are instead of isolating them in an effort to cling to the light we have.

It's so easy to forget as human beings that we are on this journey together. It takes love, compassion and strength to be able to say to those in the dark, I don't understand you, but I know that if I had been given a different set of experiences, a different environment, a different culture, I could easily understand you. I could be doing what you're doing, living the way you're living, caring passionately about what you care about. You are part of who I am as a human being, and you are important to me.



Emily Anne Hedrick is a student at Goshen (Ind.) College.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, s/he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. —2 Corinthians 5:16-20, English Standard Version

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

Marks of a new creation

by Sarah Lynne Anderson

I didn't grow up in the Mennonite church. I grew up in the suburbs of Orlando, Fla., going to a large evangelical church. I loved my experience there—people showed me a lot of love—but it didn't really help me understand this passage (2 Corinthians 5:16-20).

I was never sure what it looked like to be a new creation or what it meant to regard anyone according to the flesh. My life looked a lot like my peers' lives. While I talked about Jesus and went to church more than they did, I still had similar values, dreams and standards for my life. I knew I should do well in school, go to college, pursue a career that would sustain a middle-class lifestyle and hopefully have a family I would raise to do similar things.

Paul is not referring to personal morality or a middle-class lifestyle when he says we are a 'new creation.'

Presumably this was all part of what it meant to follow Jesus, too, so for a long time my biggest claim to Christian "fame" was that I never cussed, was a good student and went on service trips every summer. These are all commendable (particularly the latter), but Paul is not referring to personal morality or a middle-class lifestyle when he says we are a "new creation."

The moments that are so backward that they couldn't be anything else but God's kingdom inspire me—like when a homeless Ethiopian friend bought me lunch.

To get the gist of what Paul is saying in this passage, we need to peek back at verses 14 and 15: "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. Therefore, we no longer regard anyone according to the flesh."

This is a pretty radical passage. It starts with the self-sacrificial love of Christ for everyone, then essentially says, "So now we question everything we've been taught to assume." That's what it means to be radical, to get back to the underlying value (love) and rebuild everything according to that value, laying aside anything that gets in the way, no matter how important we thought it was, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us.

That's what Paul means when he says we regard no one according to the flesh. We question everything our culture says about how the world should be, and we build a new world based on Christ's love. It means we no longer judge people according to our culture's standards. We don't judge based on ethnicity or skin color. We don't elevate people based on their class or choose whether or not to associate with them based on their gender. We don't base our love or help on people's legal status in this country. What this passage says is that these standards of the flesh (our culture's standards) are no longer our standards. We don't let our categories become divisive or cause us to fear, oppress or harm others. Our God is a god of reconciliation, and because we are in Christ, we are the Great Reconcilers—new creatures belonging to a new creation that is marked by the image of Christ.

How then do we view each other? We view each other as family and sometimes as comrades or friends but always as people loved by God and in the process of being reconciled.

Isn't that a beautiful image? The idea that all the things that cause us to hate or fear or belittle or shun or oppress are all meaningless to God and meaningless in the church? Paul says they have passed away. We don't regard anyone that way because we live in a different world—a new one inaugurated by Christ.

I wish I could say that as confidently as Paul does, but often I still find myself in a world more interested in one group's well-being than another's or more likely to fear a certain group or to beat them up or simply ignore them or to try to exclude them from churches or conferences. Most of the time I live in that world. Sometimes,

AMBS

inside this issue

2 Being formed and transformed

3 Combining spirituality and academics

Your gifts at work

4 President's Window

Panorama

Spring 2011
Volume 21 Issue 2

AMBS window

Seeing with the eyes of faith

Ted Koontz, Ph.D., Professor of Ethics and Peace Studies

Because I'm a product of the 60s and 70s and the son of a Mennonite pastor, it was perhaps unavoidable that my Christian faith and its relationship to peace, justice, conflict and war have been my most pressing and enduring concerns. It was not too difficult to be a Christian pacifist then, for my understanding of the theological and ethical "rightness" of nonviolence fit together nicely with my understanding of the wrong-headedness of the Vietnam War and the effectiveness of nonviolent social transformation. It seemed clear to me that the most important thing I could do was to show that war was stupid—not only wrong on Christian grounds.

So, after college and seminary, I began my serious scholarly work by studying international relations, particularly war, and more particularly, nuclear strategy and war. If I could solve this hardest problem, everything else would fall into place! But I did not solve the problem; instead I came to see the powerful logic of war, and even of threatening nuclear war. A crisis of faith resulted as I realized that the wise of the world thought the wisdom of the cross was foolishness. My comfortable assumption that Christian faith and "good sense" were in harmony was shattered. I was faced with the necessity to choose. And, considering the fact that I teach at AMBS, you might not think it strange that I chose Christian faith.

My early seminary research and teaching focused most on how to follow the ethical teachings of Jesus. How do we think Christianly about war, peace, and injustice—and how do we speak from Christian commitments and values to people who do not share those commitments?

I have not abandoned exploration of these issues or studying and teaching about them. But I have come to believe that the Gospel is far more than the mandate to follow Jesus' teachings and applying them to macro issues of war, peace, and injustice. As I have learned to know myself better, I have come to see that the problems are not only "out there." Increasingly I have come to believe that saving the world (and saving me!) is God's work. When we notice that basic truth we respond with gratitude and following Jesus, however timidly it flows from that gratitude.

So in recent years a new and favorite course has been "Christian Spirituality and Peacemaking." Being transformed by the renewing of our minds, by coming to see with the eyes of faith, seems crucial to me. This being transformed (slightly) has led me to relish talking personally with students about faith and to fixing up houses that I rent to lower income folks in Elkhart. More modest than saving the world from nuclear annihilation, but perhaps more suited to me, since I am not God. ●

Top: Ted Koontz meets with Dianna Graham, a student from Elkhart, Ind., in the Master of Arts in Christian Formation program.

Being formed and transformed

Top: Janeen Bertsche Johnson, as campus pastor, helps to coordinate the spiritual life resources available to students, including coordinating chapel services.

Bottom: Loren L. Johns, in addition to teaching Bible courses, directs the Master of Divinity program and helps to teach its senior capstone course, Growth in Ministry.

Loren L. Johns, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament
Excerpted from "Faith and Historical-Critical Pursuits in Teaching,"* Conrad Grebel Review, *Spring 2010

In the first Bible class I took at Goshen College, I recognized that Stanley C. Shenk, the professor, was not threatened by the "hard" questions of biblical studies. He considered critical thinking about life, about God and about the Bible as a way of loving God with all one's mind. As a teacher of the Bible, I have tried to emulate him in his open-eyed embrace of difficult questions in the context of faith and I have grown in my conviction that it is possible to be both honest and Christian at the same time.

At AMBS I teach "Canon and Community" ... [and] an introductory course called "Reading the Bible." For many students, these courses are a stretch because they had never been encouraged to think critically about the Bible in their churches. Some were educated to think critically in university, but not to take their faith seriously or to think of critical scholarship as a tool in God's reign.

Students in "Reading the Bible" who are most profoundly affected by it are not those who have learned "new facts." Rather, they are those who were disoriented by and reoriented in their learning. They struggled with the critical approach to biblical studies because they felt that a world to which they had long clung was passing out of existence before their very eyes. But they eventually embraced a new world—a new way of making sense of the Bible through the eyes of faith. ●

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, M.Div.

Campus pastor and an instructor of the first-year Formation in Ministry course and several ministry colloquia

I often hear students reflecting on the ways their faith has grown at AMBS. There are many "aha" moments, when faith commitments are expanded or renewed. For example, first-year students learn how their personality type impacts their spiritual life, what kinds of faith practices will be most comfortable for their personality, and what practices might pull them toward a more holistic experience of God. This awareness is very valuable to many students, sometimes freeing them from their frustration that certain types of prayer haven't "worked" for them.

Students often discover new and meaningful spiritual disciplines through course assignments, spiritual direction, spiritual friendships or prayer groups. And of course, times of community worship such as our twice-weekly chapel services are foundational both to the nurture of individual faith and of our faith community.

It is a privilege and joy to walk with students as they explore both the intellectual and emotional aspects of their faith, as they are being formed and transformed as followers of Christ. ●

Spiritual growth is integral to learning

Each of the four masters degrees that AMBS offers has clear educational goals, and each set of goals includes at least one—out of six or seven—that identifies spiritual growth as an integral part of the learning. Educational goals include the following for the designated degree programs.

Graduates with a ...

- **Master of Divinity** are formed by a continuing encounter with God.
- **Master of Arts in Christian Formation** assess their own growth toward spiritual and personal maturity
- **Master of Arts: Peace Studies** demonstrate a commitment to spiritual growth that sustains peace- and justice-making
- **Master of Arts: Theological Studies** articulate how they are integrating their intellectual and spiritual life—how they are understanding and loving God more truly.

Overall educational objectives at AMBS include "growth toward personal and spiritual maturity as well as development of theological depth and wise practice in ministry," according to AMBS's curriculur design.

For more information, **visit www.ambs.edu/about/theological-education** and **www.ambs.edu/academics/catalog** ●

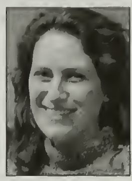
Combining spirituality and academics

Malinda Berry
Instructor in Theological Studies, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

AMBS helped me discover my inner-banner-maker. That may sound silly, but it's true! Before arriving at AMBS, I never really thought of myself as someone with much to contribute to congregational life beyond song leading or teaching Sunday school. While I was a Master of Arts student with clear intentions to go on to further graduate study, I found myself beginning to dabble in the worship arts. My dabbling became something more serious as I began to create banners and worship visuals for my home congregation. Advent, Pentecost, Peace Sunday—I was on fire, experimenting with ways to convey theological messages using texture, pattern and color. Those banners were a powerful tool for me to channel my experience of God, and some are still in use, ten years later! Had it not been for the rich air I breathed at AMBS, I do not think I would be nearly so committed to incorporating the visual arts into my life and teaching as I am today. ●

Gary Yamasaki
Member of Biblical Studies Faculty, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, British Columbia

It has been nearly a quarter of a century since I graduated from AMBS, and I truly appreciate the ways in which the seminary prepared me to go on to pursue doctoral studies. However, some of my most vivid memories of my AMBS experience relate to how my spiritual life was impacted by my time there. For example, one course I took—"Spiritual Life Disciplines"—had as one of its requirements a "silent retreat." This was a retreat involving prayer and journaling and reading of Scripture … but all in the context of no conversing among the retreat participants, a seemingly odd stipulation, but one that contributed to an experience of God deeper than any I had ever had. And besides this retreat, the classes throughout the semester introduced me to numerous spiritual practices, some of which I still use to nurture my spiritual life even now, 25 years later. ●



Laura L. Brenneman
Associate Professor of Religion, Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio

Prior to being a student at AMBS (1999-2001) I had decided never to read the Bible again. My difficulty was that when I read the Bible on my own, I could not "hear" past the subtle and overt teaching from childhood that women are not reliable interpreters of scripture nor legitimate church leaders.

When I came to AMBS, then, I was not interested in the Bible. I knew of the Bible requirements and I would put up with them; however, those classes were exciting and intriguing to me. They were helping me develop a vibrant personal hermeneutic and, over time, I reluctantly admitted that I loved them. There was a day when Dr. Perry Yoder issued me a challenge: pursuit of vocation can be like the merchant who sells all in order to purchase the pearl of greatest value (Matt 13.45-46).

I took that challenge. After graduating with a Master of Arts: Theological Studies in biblical studies, I got a Ph.D. in Bible and I have been teaching Bible at Bluffton University for seven years. The courses I took at AMBS were crucial for my spiritual formation. They helped me identify my passion for study and teaching of the Bible. ●

Your gifts at work

The Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount, the worship center for AMBS, will begin undergoing renovation this spring or summer. Project goals include:

- making the building accessible to people with disabilities;
- improving energy efficiency in the 46-year-old building;
- improving climate control for the comfort of worshippers and protection of the piano and organ.

Plans include extending the lobby for main-floor restrooms and an elevator. Electric wiring, flooring, seating, windows and roof insulation will receive needed upgrades. Current funding has reached one million dollars of the $1.8 million goal, and the seminary is seeking contributions from individuals and foundations to complete the goal. An endowment of $500,000 for ongoing maintenance of the building in included. ●

AMBS alumni news

Lois Siemens (Master of Divinity 2006) was ordained at Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Sask., on January 9.

Charlie Geiser (Master of Divinity 2010) is pastor of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Leo Driedger (Bachelor of Divinity 1957) has written *At the Forks: Mennonites in Winnipeg*, published by Pandora Press.

Mark Jantzen (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1993), professor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., published *Mennonite German Soldiers: Nation, Religion and Family in the Prussian East, 1772–1880* with the University of Notre Dame Press.

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht (former student) has been nominated to be the moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA. She is coordinator of field education for Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary.

Samuel Voth Schrag (Master of Divinity 2007) has begun serving as a member of the Mennonite Church USA executive board. He is pastor of St. Louis (Mo.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ambs.edu
advancement@ambs.edu

President's Window

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

I have never liked the stereotypical way academics and spirituality are often played off against each other—as if they are mutually disdainful and incompatible approaches to faith and learning.

One of the happiest discoveries in my new AMBS community is the depth of spiritual devotion that coexists inseparably with academic excellence. What I now know, because I see it daily demonstrated at AMBS, is that one can be prayerfully attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit even as one demonstrates an astonishing keenness of intellect. One can be really smart in all sorts of intriguing ways, and thoroughly devoted to Jesus Christ. One can employ the sharpest intellect to mine the treasures of Scripture and playfully delight in their wisdom and beauty. One can be radically prophetic and profoundly humble. One can articulate brilliant theology and be deeply formed theologically as a peacemaker who loves the Lord.

When fear holds the upper hand, faith and learning threaten to undermine each other. When we fear that new learning will destroy faith, we put blinders in place and miss the wideness of God's multi-splendored world. When we fear that our faith in God will inhibit new learning, we trap ourselves in a monotone empiricism that misses the broad spectrum of full-orbed spiritual knowledge.

It is abundantly evident to those of us who are deeply rooted in faith and intrepid explorers of new knowledge, that when held together, faith and learning, spirituality and academics are two intimate friends who love nothing more than to mutually enrich and empower each other.

The wise sage of Proverbs observes over and over that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." The desire for new knowledge, when untethered from reverence for the Creator, can quickly run amok in its own power mongering, self-centered pursuits. A profession of faith that isn't available for examination in light of new knowledge can quickly fly off into pompous pretense and self aggrandizing delusion.

It is with a deep desire to be reliable witnesses to the true reality of the kingdom of God among us that we at AMBS engage in educational formation that calls out the best of spirit, body and mind. ●

panorama

Summer offerings at AMBS include The Church and Race, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and Contemporary Theologies of Mission. See the entire roster of summer courses at **www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/summer**

The AMBS annual report for 2009-2010, with information about the seminary's five core values, is available online. To read it, follow links from **www.ambs.edu/giving/annual-report**

Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission, was honored recently with a Festschrift, *History and mission in Eastern Europe: Continuing the conversation*, edited by Mary Ramer and Peter Penner. With chapters in English, German and Russian, it reflects issues of missiology and church history that have been important in Walter's life work with churches in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Upcoming offerings from the AMBS Church Leadership Center include a webinar, "Six images of the preacher," on May 11, at 2:30 p.m. EDT; and a daylong workshop, "Making marriage the church's business," on May 11. For more information, see **www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter** ●

Spring 2011
Volume 21 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker
Photographers: Peter Ringenberg, Steve Echols

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

though, I step back for a second and see something remarkable.

I realize that a lot of people the world likes to categorize or disdain or fear or bully—people I used to (and sometimes still do) view the same way—are people I know. And not only know but associate with, am friends with and am now becoming family with. We are a long way off from looking like the new creation in my community, Missio Dei, but at the same time I can see that it's happening and that gives me hope.

I joined this community more than two years ago, and my world has changed a lot since then. Missio Dei is a Mennonite church and intentional community in Minneapolis. We're called to lives of hospitality, simplicity, prayer, peacemaking and resistance—resistance particularly against the things in our country's culture that are divisive and oppressive. What does that look like in our homes?

It looks like community meals made with commonly owned food and guest rooms available to both the well-off people who visit us and the people who come to us in need. It looks like struggling through cultural differences between Latino folks and people with Scandinavian heritage, trying to love people who have been in and out of jail or struggle with addiction, learning from and listening to LGBT people as well as folks who are ex-gay. It looks like a lot of failure and tiny beautiful successes. In the end, it's living in a clash between God's kingdom and this world. Much of the time it is messy, but the moments that are so backward that they couldn't be anything else but God's kingdom inspire me—like when a homeless Ethiopian friend bought me lunch.

I can't wait to see more of this new world. It's a world where people are being reconciled to each other and showing other people what it means to be reconciled and participating in a whole creation that is being reconciled to God. The hard part is that it all starts with getting rid of biases and judgments and prejudices that come with viewing each other according to the flesh. That's the hard work.

It's hard work because it means we are going to be uncomfortable. We are going to have to spend a lot of time listening (or learning how to speak up when we would normally be silenced). We may have to make some decisions that a lot of people find foolish and that "a lot of people" will probably find offensive, too.

Worse yet, it will probably affect our security—financially, physically and psychologically. We will probably lose some friends and maybe some family. But we will also make some new friends who have experienced a lot of pain. Being friends with them may be hard, but I'm fairly certain it's all worth it—at least I'm increasingly banking on the idea that it is. I think that's what it means to put your faith in Christ, so I'm doing (something close to) my best to live it out.

Let's get to praying and listening and working on actually acting like the new creatures God has so boldly proclaimed us to be.

If you agree, then I implore you: Let's get to praying and listening and working on actually acting like the new creatures God has so boldly proclaimed us to be. Below are some questions that I hope will help you in this process:

1. What are some of the ways "the flesh" organizes people (for example, by gender or class)?
2. How are these groups viewed, and how do you view them—whether positively or negatively (or some mix of the two)?
3. What would it look like if we viewed all these people in light of God's kingdom?
4. How was Christ viewed according to the flesh? How do we view him now?
5. What commonalities might he have with people who are marginalized and categorized today?
6. What are you going to do about your biases?
7. What are you willing to give up or lose in pursuit of a kingdom perspective? (Be specific, concrete and realistic. Think about what you would be willing to lose in the next steps of this process and about concrete things or people who might be affected.)

Sarah Lynne Anderson is a former Floridian currently braving Minnesota winters. She graduated from Webster University, St. Louis, in 2008 with a major in anthropology and a minor in international human rights. She serves in AmeriCorps as a teacher's assistant and lives in Missio Dei's Clare House with friends. Occasionally she writes articles for JesusRadicals.com or records their bimonthly podcast, The Iconocast.

BRIDGES TO CROSS

This is the second of four Bible studies on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 in *The Mennonite* leading up to Pittsburgh 2011, the next Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, to be held July 4-9 in downtown Pittsburgh. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by this text and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.

What makes us a church?

André Gingerich Stoner is director of holistic witness and of interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA.

What makes us a church and binds us together as Mennonite Christians? We are not church together because we have a pope. We are not church together because we have a fixed and timeless creed. We are not church together because we all have the same last name and attended the same colleges. We are not church together because we all use the same logo and the same shade of green.

In our congregations, area and national conferences, we are church because we have been drawn together by Jesus and because we keep wrestling with each other and the Spirit about what it means to let him shape, guide and use us.

Somewhere, somehow, sometime, each of us has been touched by Jesus' love and grace, and our lives have been changed. His words and vision have taken hold in us. Through Jesus we have been drawn into a new community with new allegiances and with a deep love for each other.

> When we stop giving and receiving counsel, we stop being the church.

When we enter that community, we promise to give and receive counsel. This is one of the things we pledge to each other when we are baptized. We recognize that we need each other to help us find our way. We are different parts of a body, and the give and take between us is like blood flowing between the heart and the fingers and the kidney. As we encounter new situations, we discern together what it means to follow Jesus in that time and place.

Not only do we talk with each other, but we talk with our mothers and fathers in the faith. We listen to the words and witness of Peter Dyck, Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus, James and Rowena Lark, Dirk Willems, Michael and Margarita Sattler. Even if some of them were quirky and didn't get it all right, we give thanks for their faithful witness and place ourselves in that ongoing stream.

Likewise we engage with statements that our community has lived by, including the Schleitheim, Dordrecht, 1963 and 1995 confessions of faith. They aren't God's final word, but we take them with utter seriousness. We enter into dialogue with them and heed their insight and wisdom.

As a community of faith we often have a common mind. But sometimes a new situation or a new experience raises questions where we thought there had been agreement. These are times when it is especially important to listen and speak with each other to test the new insight that some are claiming. This is a tender and challenging time of both honoring what we have agreed on and being open to see if the Spirit has a new word for us.

Dialogue is different from a debate in which the assumption is that one side is right and the other side is wrong. The goal in a debate of that kind is to prove that you are right. In dialogue the assumption is that each side holds some of the truth, but God alone holds the whole truth. The goal in a dialogue is to speak and listen carefully in order to uncover the truth that each of us has so that together we can come to a greater understanding of God's truth.

We enter these conversations in the name and spirit of Christ. This means approaching each other with love as sisters and brothers, listening with generous and open hearts and speaking honestly, honoring the weaker brother or sister, being patient, submitting to each other. It means hanging in there with each other without being dismissive and contemptuous of each other or threatening to walk away or break ties. It means trusting the Spirit to guide us.

We are people gathered around Jesus, seeking together to make ourselves available to him. When we stop giving and receiving counsel, we stop being the church. We may be an organization with plans, we may be an institution with programs, but when we stop talking we are no longer the church, where the Spirit speaks and guides.

Yet when we love each other and are open to each other and to God's Spirit, God is able to accomplish through us abundantly far more than we can ever ask or imagine. This is our hope and our faith. TM

Good schools for everyone

An Ohio mother was recently arrested, charged and given a felony conviction for falsifying records on school forms. On the school enrollment form she listed a false address for her children, an address that is within the school system. The mother and her daughters actually lived in another, nearby district.

She did this so that her daughters could attend a better school than the one assigned to them based on where they lived. Once the story about the woman's crime was released, public opinion weighed in on a number of issues, but two rose to the top: (1) the rightness or wrongness of the mother's actions, and (2) why anyone would risk arrest for such action. The mother was valorized by some and vilified by others, with pundits and regular people taking sides in two opposing camps. Some said it doesn't matter why she did it, the woman broke the law by taking something that was not hers to take, and she should be held responsible for her actions. The other camp argued about the disparity in the education system that necessitated such a choice.

We were privileged enough to make that choice without having to break the law.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 80 percent of funding for primary and secondary schools comes from state and local governments. Funding schemes are complex and vary from state to state and district to district and cannot be neatly summarized here. However, because most public schools in the United States receive a large portion of their funds from property taxes, the prosperity or poverty of a given neighborhood may likely directly correlate with the resources available to help fund local schools. Poor districts have poor schools; wealthier districts have more resources available to them.

When I was growing up, my school district was modest at best. I had many fine teachers who were enthusiastic and encouraging and taught me well. I was able to participate in a number of extracurricular activities—radio club, journalism club and gospel choir. But year after year, the system struggled more and more, victim along with other city institutions to a battered economy. Even with the good memories of engaged, dedicated teachers and some extras, I was aware of what we didn't have, because I knew what friends who lived in wealthier districts had in their schools. With the hindsight of an adult who knows many public school teachers and their struggles, I now wonder about some of my teachers who were less enthusiastic. Had they been worn down by trying to do too much with too little?

As the city tax base eroded because people with means migrated to the suburbs for better services, including schools, our local system suffered even more. During those years, it seemed as if everyone who could get out did so, diminishing the base that supported schools even more. By the time my own children were ready for school, we were faced with the school question ourselves. And yes, we moved to the suburbs—in part because we knew our children would attend schools that had smaller class sizes and more resources. It was a privileged choice. Like others before us, we made the choice that would benefit our children, knowing we were taking our tax revenue with us and therefore participating in the decline of the school system. The decision that was best for our child was one that benefited our family and disadvantaged others. And we were privileged enough to make that choice without having to break the law. I recognize that we continue to be privileged enough to have children attending private Mennonite schools where they (and I and the church and the world) benefit from the excellent instruction and care they receive.

Because of that decision and my own experience as a public school student, I understand what Kelly Williams-Bolar did. We wanted the same thing—a good education for our children. Ms. Williams-Bolar, a single mother on public assistance, a student herself (studying to become a teacher) had fewer resources than I did. Her act, I believe, was one of desperation—she did the best she could to carve out an individual solution to a structural problem. As a mother, I understand her actions well. But I hope that even if I were not a parent, I would want the best for her children and for all children, not just mine. I hope I would still work for systems and structures that benefit all children in this country and in the world, so their parents don't have to break the law to get what my children get. TM

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

A conscientious-objectors-to-war-taxes proposal

Harold A. Penner is a member of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Conscripted daily to pay taxes that underwrite killing and warmaking, many U.S. Mennonites are seeking ways to refrain from paying for war. This proposal, if adopted by the Mennonite Church USA and implemented by local congregations, would provide the spiritual resources, human solidarity and material support to enable more Mennonites to follow the prompting of their Spirit-endowed consciences and not pay the taxes used to support killing, warmaking and militarism.

This proposal is rooted in the biblical commandment not to kill (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), in Jesus' teachings to love God, the neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39) and the enemy (Matthew 5:44) as well as in the historic statements of our churches.

During this era of perpetual war, when our national government spends as much on military force as the rest of the world combined, we fail in our Christian calling if we only recall our legacy of witness. We must find ways in our time to support those whose consciences do not permit them to offer their funds for warmaking. We are compelled to address this in our congregations, teaching one another the ways that make for peace.

> We must find ways in our time to support those whose consciences do not permit them to offer their funds for warmaking.

Mennonite Church USA needs to do these:

1. Establish and publicize a "Conscientious Objectors' Peace Tax Fund" to help underwrite peace education and action in our congregations and support individuals and their families who suffer material loss as a result of their refusal to pay all of or a portion of federal tax assessments allocated to present or past military purposes.
2. Call upon and equip congregations in Mennonite Church USA through its area conferences to redouble their peace education and action endeavors and to support individuals seeking alternatives to paying for war through federal taxation.

Under this proposal, the "Conscientious Objectors' Peace Tax Fund" would be funded by designated contributions received from individuals and local participating congregations. Fifty percent of annual contributions to the fund would be used by Mennonite Church USA to conduct peace education and action as well as to administer the Fund on a national level.

The other 50 percent would be invested in socially responsible interest-bearing instruments and used as requested to meet up to 90 percent of the material needs of the war tax redirector and families including, but not limited to, amounts seized by the Internal Revenue Service from bank accounts and wages. Should the war tax redirector be jailed for refusing to underwrite the U.S. military, this fund would be available to provide financial resources to support family obligations while the redirector is incarcerated.

Through the centuries, Anabaptist churches have taken various positions on what faithfulness to Christ means with regard to payment of taxes for war. This mixed history is reflected in the variety of views held in our congregations. Although we are not all of one mind on this matter, we must continue to teach one another the ways that make for peace and covenant to support those who act at personal risk to not pay for war.

Some may refrain from paying the entire portion of the assessment allocated by the government to military purposes. Others may hold back 10.4 percent of the amount assessed or only $10.40 as a symbolic witness. Others may decide to lower the tax assessment by using legal tax avoidance techniques.

This proposal seeks to strengthen and inspire the partnership between conscientious objectors and Mennonite Church USA to do the following:

- bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ in a world involved with endless war in the pursuit of imperial control;
- encourage and strengthen the witness of Mennonite Church USA regarding Jesus' way of nonviolence and peace;
- provide opportunities for war-tax redirectors to channel their "conscripted" income toward meeting human needs;
- persuade Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill;
- reduce annual U.S. military budgets;
- decrease the carbon footprint of the military-industrial complex on our planet;
- increase federal spending on legitimate human needs worldwide;
- have conscientious objection to military taxation included as a human right in the First Amendment "free exercise of religion" clause of the U.S. Constitution and
- care for all of God's creation, promote the nonviolent life and teachings of Jesus, enhance the mission of the church and advance the development of the human race. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MC USA leaders stand against immigration bill

Indiana Senate passes bill to bring Arizona-style immigration law enforcement.

Marty Lehman, director of churchwide operations for Mennonite Church USA, speaks at a press conference on March 7.

Two Executive Board staff members and the chief executive officers of all Mennonite Church USA institutions with headquarters in Indiana held a press conference on March 7. The purpose was to emphasize their opposition to a bill passed by the Indiana Senate on Feb. 23 that would bring Arizona-style immigration law enforcement to Indiana. Executive Board staff members Marty Lehman and André Gingerich Stoner led the press conference, held in the Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart.

"Together we stand opposed to Indiana Senate Bill 590," Stoner said in a statement endorsed by all nine leaders. "Among other things, the bill authorizes local law enforcement officials to verify the immigration status of individuals and detain them for this purpose. ... Our concern about this legislation is rooted in our commitment to follow Jesus. Jesus demonstrated that God's love has no borders."

One television station and three newspapers covered the press conference; several reporters pressed the leaders on their reasons for speaking out.

After acknowledging that national immigration policies need to be fixed, Stoner said, "This [bill] is like a small, dirty bandage put onto a large open wound."

Another reporter asked if there were specific parts of SB 590 the leaders found objectionable. Stoner pointed to one of the "18 or 19 subsections" that would require all public documents to be in English only.

"I want my Spanish neighbors to be able to read their [utility] bill or a note from school," Stoner said.

Mennonite Education Agency executive director Carlos Romero talked about the personal effect of the national immigration debate. Romero is a native of Puerto Rico.

"I was born in this country," Romero said. "I can go back four or five generations in this country, and I am amazed how many times I am questioned because English is not my first language."

One reporter asked what percentage of Mennonite Church USA members are immigrants. Lehman said there is no record of this percentage.

"We are all 100 percent immigrants," said Gwen Gustafson Zook, MCC Great Lakes staff member, who joined the CEOs at the press conference, "with the exception of congregations that are Native American."

Participating in the press conference were Lois Johns Kaufmann, Central District Conference; Daniel Z. Miller, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference; Stanley Green, Mennonite Mission Network; Romero; Larry Miller, Everence; Rick Stiffney, MHS Alliance; Sara Wenger Shenk, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Jim Brenneman, Goshen College; Stoner and Lehman.

On March 1, some of the same Mennonite Church USA leaders sent a letter to members of their staffs who work in Indiana, asking them to speak out against the SB 590. The letter was signed by Ervin Stutzman, executive director for Mennonite Church USA and four other CEOs: Carlos Romero, Stanley Green, Larry Miller and Rick Stiffney.

"The 2003 Mennonite Church USA churchwide statement on immigration calls on us to welcome the stranger," said the letter, "and to advocate for just and humane immigration policies with local, state and national elected officials." The March 1 letter asked Indiana staff members to register their opposition with their Indiana House representatives and the governor. It also asked staff members to sign the Indiana Compact, which is described as "a bipartisan initiative that offers guidelines for a just and humane immigration policy (www.indianacompact.com)."—*Everett J. Thomas*

CYCLE THE GALILEE
November 6-13. Join int'l cyclists to support a Christian hospital in Nazareth. Cycle Mount Carmel to Sea of Galilee and celebrate at the finish line with the people of Nazareth.

www.nazarethproject.org

Church infringes on gang turf through peace

Ecuadorian church attracts 50 children to monthly peace education workshops.

Kelsey Hartman

Daniela Sanchez, coordinator of the peace education workshops, helps Danny Males, 7, paint his handprint as a promise to abstain from drugs and alcohol.

Children sat in rapt attention as the team of peacemakers acted out the final tender scene of Oscar Wilde's short story "The Selfish Giant" through a cardboard box, fashioned into a big-screen television.

The Giant's garden, once flourishing, suffered a perpetual winter after he banished the children from it. One morning, he saw the blossoms of spring returning to one corner of the garden. Upon venturing out of his house, he encountered a sobbing child who had wandered into the garden. The Giant realized that the winter was the result of his selfishness. Perching the small boy in a sturdy tree branch as the snow retreated and the flowers returned, he turned to the children and said: "I have been so selfish. From now on, children, this is our garden."

The mock television special, meant to teach the importance of sharing, was a key portion of last November's Peace Education Workshops sponsored by Quito (Ecuador) Mennonite Church in the El Inca sector in the northeastern part of the city. The monthly workshops attract nearly 50 children ages 3 through 11 and feature songs, games, theater, crafts and discussions to subtly teach the children how to be peacemakers.

The church began the program, called the El Inca Neighborhood Peace Project, about seven years ago to confront the violence, poverty and social challenges that plague the area.

The project is an outgrowth of the ministry of César Moya and Patricia Urueña, the original pastors who planted the church, and the Ecuador Partnership for Mission, a collaboration of Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Mission Network and the Mennonite Church of Colombia.

After the play, Erica Hartman and Kelsey Hartman, two Mennonite Mission Network workers who plan and carry out the workshops, asked the children to answer these questions: What is peace? and, Why is peace important?

Their answers were candid and personal.

"Peace is sharing with each other so there are no hard feelings or violence," said 11-year-old Daniela Chicaiza.

"Peace is important because when there is peace it is beautiful," said 7-year-old Steven Silva. "I can be calm. I can play."

Silva's answer speaks to the gang violence that keeps residents of his neighborhood living in fear. Urueña said the church initiated the project after a shootout in 2001 between rival gangs left a teenage boy dead a few blocks from the church.

"This situation deeply impacted us as a church, and we questioned what our mission should be as a church in this sector," she said. "Then we made a diagnosis of the sector to identify other problems affecting the neighborhood and how the church could respond to them."

With high rates of teenage alcoholism, domestic violence and soaring unemployment, many young people see joining a gang as their only option. The project is meant to confront these social problems head on and create a safer neighborhood. Urueña said that since the beginning of the workshops none of the participants has joined a gang—a testimony to the church's powerful peace witness.

"The workshops have helped unite the community in its responsibility to prevent children from joining gangs," she said. "It is important because children learn Christian values and have changed their aggressive attitudes at home and at school."

Though the workshops are geared toward children, the lessons filter through to the parents. Urueña recalled one afternoon in which the mother of a 9-year-old boy who had attended the workshops for five years came to the church in tears.

"He told his mother that he learned that children have the right to be loved and respected, and he asked her to stop hitting him and to punish him in a nonviolent way when he does something improper," Urueña said. "This woman came to us with tears in her eyes and promised us that she would never hit her son again."—*Andrew Clouse of Mennonite Mission Network*

MVSers say program builds confidence

Service influences young adults' lives even after the year ends.

When Ian Gingrich-Gaylord graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 2003 with majors in art and music, he felt aimless—insecure in his faith and unsure of how to enter the art world. Like many of his peers, he just needed a place to land.

He decided to apply to work for Mennonite Voluntary Service, a Mennonite Mission Network service program for young adults. For many young adults, MVS not only provides a path to career discernment but also a way to gain professional skills without the pressure of jumping straight into a challenging job market.

Gingrich-Gaylord was placed as an art instructor for adults with mental and physical disabilities at United Cerebral Palsy of Central California in Fresno, Calif. After a year there, he was hired by United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh and, as part of his job, was able to continue leading art groups for adults. If it weren't for his four years with the organization, he said, he may never have discovered his life's calling—art therapy. Now, at age 30, he works for Prairie View Hospital, a psychiatric facility in Newton, Kan.

"At the time, I was thinking I'd been fortunate to have these four years combining the social service aspect with art making," he says, "and so art therapy, from the little I knew about it, kind of made sense. But it was all in hindsight. There was no planning on my part that this is what I was working toward. It's definitely an experience I wouldn't have gotten if I hadn't done MVS."

Gingrich-Gaylord's experience echoes that of many MVS participants who say the skills they learn through serving influence their lives long after their terms of service end. Many continue to work in nonprofit or church organizations the rest of their lives.

Tina Histand, 24, is a migrant advocate for the Migrant Farmworkers Project in Kansas City, Mo. She has been hired to begin working as a paid staff member, starting in August, after serving with the organization as an MVS volunteer for two years. She landed the job without applying or interviewing and said that while she was interested in social work before, this placement has affirmed her plans eventually to pursue a master's degree in social work.

Histand works primarily with youth whose parents are migrant farm workers. She leads a weekly youth group in the rural apple orchards of western Missouri and interprets for families during medical and dental appointments, parent-teacher conferences and physical therapy sessions. The challenging work has boosted her self-confidence and improved her Spanish, she says.

"I've learned the demeanor and etiquette that goes along with working with clients, and understanding the boundaries of working with clients in intimate situations," she says.

She was nervous because she hadn't worked with youth before. "The idea of relating to high school kids I found pretty intimidating because I'm kind of a shy personality," she says. "Now, we're just great friends and we get along really well."

One of the benefits of serving with a small, nonprofit organization is the opportunity to be involved in a wide variety of activities, says Suzanne Gladney, the managing attorney of the Migrant Farmworkers Project and Histand's supervisor.

Paul Snyder

From left: Abby Lopez, Tina Histand and Krystal Lopez at the Migrant Farmworkers Project, Kansas City, Mo.

"That's one of the main purposes of the program," Gladney says. "In our specific placement, we provide a large scope and variety of services to the population of folks that we're assisting, so it's a really good opportunity for the volunteers to get experience dealing with a wide variety of different professional settings."

As a result of the diversity of services they provide, Gladney says, volunteers have gone on to be nurses, doctors, teachers, lawyers, midwives and healthcare managers. The organization also sent Histand to training programs in healthcare and youth leadership. Gladney says that the investment pays dividends in developing volunteers who are just as capable as the paid staff.

Now, with the security of a job offer, Histand says she is grateful for how MVS has influenced the trajectory of her life.

"I'm just so glad I did [MVS] because it's just unfolded into what was a really great fit for me on multiple levels," she says. "After a year and a half, I find myself very settled in a city I love and just doing a job that is very meaningful for me that now I'll get paid for."—*Andrew Clouse of Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite Health Assembly draws 270

Health-care workers challenged to listen to many voices

"It is the ordinary God calls, not the ordained," Albert Reyes said in the opening session of the March 11-13 Mennonite Health Assembly in San Antonio, Texas. Reyes is president of Buckner International, a Christian ministry with more than 3,000 employees that provides humanitarian aid around the world.

"Many Voices and One Spirit" was the assembly theme. Reyes said that leadership is about listening to the many ordinary voices in an organization.

"Leadership is an acoustic art," Reyes said. "God is not schizophrenic. If we listen long enough to hear different voices [we will] eventually hear God's voice."

Mennonite pastor Isaac Villegas reinforced Reyes' contention that leadership is about listening well. Villegas noted that the least-honored employees in organizations are often the most necessary. Villegas pastors the Chapel Hill (N.C) Mennonite Church. His text was 1 Corinthians 12:20-26.

"Normally when we think about honoring people we think of the head ... the person at the top of the organization," Villegas said. "But Paul messes with this way of thinking about organizations."

Everett Thomas

Ingrid DeSanctis uses her cell phone at Mennonite Health Assembly to demonstrate how electronic media can keep people from being present for each other.

Everett Thomas

Isaac Villegas responded to questions on March 11 at the Mennonite Health Assembly in San Antonio, Texas.

Villegas said that when Paul talked about the weakest members of the body, the Greek word he used meant "necessary," but it had a double meaning.

"When Paul turns our attention to the weakest member," Villegas said, "he's actually talking about genitalia. ... The 'necessary' part is the 'private part,' ... the part normally kept hidden."

In small groups after Villegas' address, some 270 health-care workers spent time in small groups considering what their organizations and professions would look like if they honored the most-necessary employees, such as custodians and cooks.

Ingrid DeSanctis addressed the "Many Voices One Spirit" theme in a different way: the many voices that come to us through electronic technology, which can divert our attention from face-to-face conversations.

"In theater," DeSanctis said on March 12, "we say, 'Be in the moment.' [Cell phones and email] can take us out of 'the moment' in our lives. There is a holiness about the ability to focus, to be still, to see each other."

DeSanctis, who teaches in the theater department at Bloomsberg (Pa.) University, attended Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and performed in "Dovetails," a performance by the comedy group Ted and Lee.

DeSanctis acknowledged a positive side to cell phones and other electronic media.

"Electronic communications can save our lives," she said. "We hope it does not take over our lives."

The annual Mennonite Health Assembly, begun originally by Mennonite Mutual Aid, is now organized by MHS Alliance. The 2012 assembly will be held March 1-3 in Louisville, Ky.—*Everett J. Thomas*

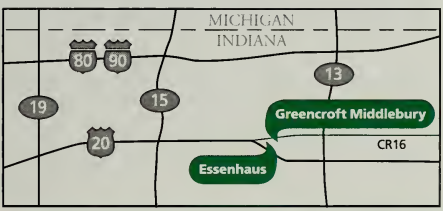
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
20
CR16
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

Mennonite Disaster Service cuts staff

$6 million response to Hurricane Katrina is wrapping up this year.

Reflecting shifts in disaster response needs, budget challenges and a renewed emphasis on the organization's original vision, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) announced Feb. 25 it is eliminating some staff positions as part of overall budget cuts.

Alfred Yoder of Rosedale, Ohio, board of directors chair, and Kevin King, executive director, said the number of staff members is being reduced from 18 to 14. Four positions are being eliminated in the Lititz binational headquarters. The four staff positions in Manitoba and one in British Columbia continue. The position of one staff person in Manitoba is not being filled while she is on a one-year maternity leave.

Kevin King

MDS is a volunteer network of Anabaptist churches that responds to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States. The work includes cleanup, repair and rebuilding homes.

King says MDS' work will continue, focusing on local and regional projects. Staff will enlist volunteers to help with office support functions when necessary, especially in the event of large disasters.

"Our $6 million response to Hurricane Katrina is wrapping up this year," King says. "There hasn't been a domestic disaster of this magnitude since. As disasters happen locally, there is less of a call for large projects. We will seek to empower the local units and regions to be part of the disaster response and long-term recovery focus. It's important to build local MDS capacity."

Volunteer numbers are as strong as ever.
—Kevin King

He says volunteer opportunities will continue despite staff and budget cuts. These include summer youth projects, partnership home programs, the RV program, traditional response project sites and MDS' collaboration with Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., and Hesston (Kan.) College in disaster-management studies.

"Volunteer numbers are as strong as ever. We have about 10,000 volunteers in our records; last year, we totaled 26,000 volunteer days in more than 23 project locations," says King.

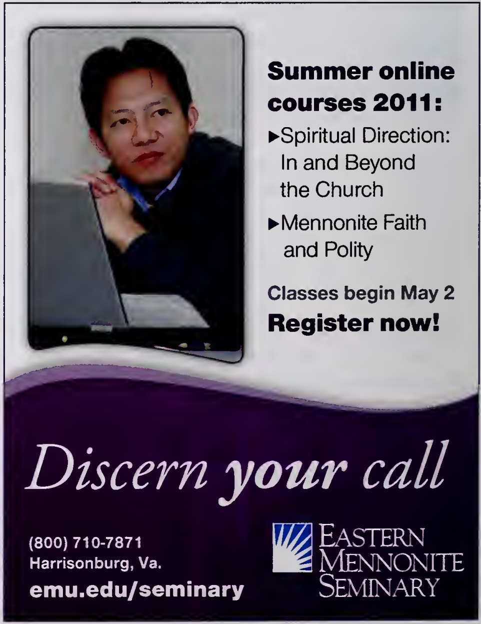
To reduce budget, the organization also is cutting back on expenses in the field. King says MDS will engage local partners to share some onsite disaster response project costs, reflecting a traditional pattern for MDS work, where the local community provides the support and MDS provides the volunteers.

MDS will also increase efforts to invite churches and other donors to give. Eleven Anabaptist denominations and conferences, representing about 4,000 congregations in Canada and the United States, are represented on the MDS boards of directors and delegates.

Like colleague agencies, recent general giving to MDS has decreased due to the economic downturn. King is grateful for those who continue to give. Last fall, MDS moved into a new facility, and its capital campaign reached its goal on schedule. "The new building is only a small factor in the budget challenges," King says.

King says he is optimistic for MDS's future and feels deeply for the people affected by the job-cutting decisions. "Each person's contribution to MDS has been important."

King quotes John Diller, an early 1950s MDS volunteer: "John said the best thing MDS can do is make the path straight and level for the volunteer to get out to the project. MDS will continue to connect the pew to the project."—*Mennonite Disaster Service*


Summer online courses 2011:

- ▸Spiritual Direction: In and Beyond the Church
- ▸Mennonite Faith and Polity

Classes begin May 2

Register now!

Discern your call

(800) 710-7871
Harrisonburg, Va.
emu.edu/seminary

EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY

Japanese Mennonites and mission workers OK

March 11 earthquake and tsunami cuts off communication with one church.

Mennonite Mission Network reports that as of March 14, none of its workers or associates in Japan has indicated being harmed by the magnitude 8.9 earthquake that struck on March 11, triggering a tsunami.

"They all felt the earthquake," says Leanne Farmwald, director of marketing and communication for MMN. "But the family in Tokyo is most affected."

Mission Network has one worker and four families of mission associates living in Japan. Mission associates are workers who relate to Mission Network but do not receive financial support from the organization.

Two mission associate families are located in the northern inland cities of Yubari and Asahikawa City. One family lives in the southern city of Kobe, and another lives in Tokyo.

Mission worker Mary Beyler reported from Obihiro, Hokkaido, that she was OK, "but people and places that I know are deeply affected."

Mission Network is partners with the Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference and the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches.

According to a March 14 release from Mennonite World Conference, Anabaptist-related church communities of Japan are largely safe, according to Takanori Sasaki, chair for Japan Mennonite Fellowship.

The church communities are scattered across Japan, most of them away from the quake's epicenter. According to Takanori, however, communication with a house church in Hitachi city was cut off.

The house church is located on the east coast in the Fukushima region—the area hardest hit by the disaster and the location of the most troubled nuclear power plants. Takanori said in a March 12 e-mail that Hitachi was not hit by the massive tsunami that followed the quake. Hitachi is about 220 kilometers south of Sendai, which is near the quake's epicenter and approximately 100 kilometers from the Fukushima power plants.

Japan is home to five Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ groups. They count a total baptized membership of about 3,000 in 70 congregations.

Mennonite Central Committee is now accepting donations for earthquake relief.—*releases from Mission Network and Mennonite World Conference with reporting by Anna Groff*

Recipe for disaster:

1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS

Goodville Mutual

New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC

EUROPEAN MENNONITE VOLUNTARY SERVICE
MVS
Calvin Wall Redekop

European Mennonite Voluntary Service: Youth Idealism in Post-World War II Europe, Calvin W. Redekop. "One of the most dynamic Mennonite movements has been youth-oriented service. Redekop is an exceptional quide." —*John A. Lapp*. 214p $14.95

A Table of Sharing: Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity, ed. Alain Epp Weaver, who " has assembled gifted scholars to contribute insightful essays." —*Robert Kreider* 432p $29.95

A TABLE of Sharing

Diary of a Kidnapped Colombian Governor

Diary of a Kidnapped Colombian Governor: A Journey Toward Nonviolent Transformation, Guillermo Gaviria Correa, whose "writings reveal a brave and deeply spiritual man." —*Mairead Maguire, Winner, Nobel Peace Prize*. 280p $17.95

Cascadia

www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

Groups help each other with convention expenses

Hampton, Va., church helps L.A. Indonesian church attend Convention 2011.

Rebekka Stutzman

Elaina Widjaja and Eric Rasyidi, youth from Maranatha Christian Fellowship, Northridge, Calif., at Columbus 2009.

Bake sales, silent auctions, car washes, rock-a-thons, the traveling yard flamingo—chances are that announcements for these fund-raisers are appearing in church bulletins across the country. It's a convention year.

As lighthearted as some of these moneymaking schemes may be, they help defray real costs. The average expense per youth to attend convention is $500—not including travel. For smaller congregations with sizable youth groups, fund-raising can be challenging, especially if the convention location isn't within driving distance.

In the ramp-up to Columbus 2009, this was exactly the situation in which Los Angeles-area Maranatha Christian Fellowship—an 80-member congregation made up almost entirely of Indonesian immigrants—found itself. With a thriving youth group of more than 20 teens, the congregation was struggling to raise enough funds to subsidize the teens' convention costs.

Maranatha's youth pastor, Rebekka Stutzman, believed that Maranatha's students would especially benefit from physically experiencing their place in the larger Mennonite church.

"As an Indonesian immigrant church—the second generation—they're more and more looking for an identity and belonging," she says. "Convention is a great opportunity for them to see, Hey, we're a part of a bigger church than our local congregation, and even find connections with people across distance and ethnic lines."

While attending a Youth Ministry Council meeting in Columbus, Ohio, Stutzman discussed her church's financial situation with Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. Meanwhile, Glen Guyton, who at the time was youth pastor for Calvary Community Church—a largely multicultural congregation of about 500 families in Hampton, Va.—was sitting on a slight surplus of fund-raising dollars. The match was made, and with help from Calvary and other contributors, including Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church youth, Maranatha was able to send 12 students to Columbus 2009.

"It's wonderful to watch these partnerships happen," says Swartzendruber Miller, who took three calls last year from churches looking to sponsor other congregations. "For the giving church, it's great to see what fund-raising can do and how we are called to share what we have, but also the receiving congregation knows they are a valued part of Mennonite Church USA and that we as a church want them to be a part of the gathering at convention."

The teens from Calvary and Maranatha met each other at one of the worship sessions at Columbus. Janseen Howell, current high school program director for Calvary, says: "The Maranatha students were so grateful and excited to be there. It really put into perspective what we often take for granted because we've been able to attend so many conventions."

Both Howell and Stutzman say the value of sending students to convention is clear. And engaging in partnerships like Calvary's and Maranatha's is a way to make the experience of convention—what it really means to belong to and participate in the larger Mennonite church—even more special. At Columbus 2009, Elaina Widjaja, a Maranatha student, was inspired by a quilting demonstration to take up knitting, a skill she's put to use making more than 200 scarves to donate to mission agencies. Calvary's youth group won the first-ever step-show contest. Teens from each group learned about Mennonite higher education.

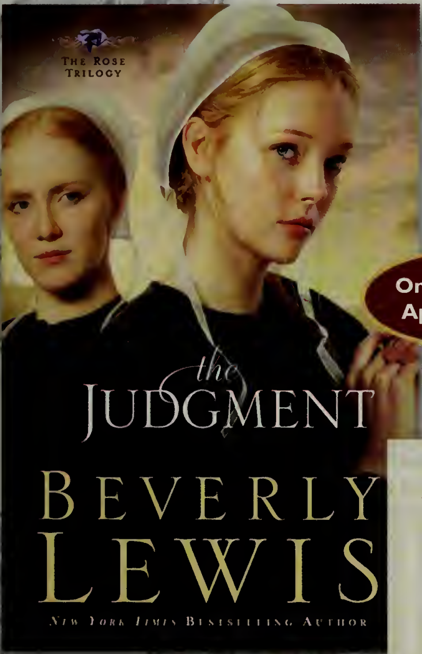
"It is an opportunity to build relationships and bridges at the same time," says Stutzman. And the relationship-building doesn't end with convention; people from Maranatha and Calvary have since exchanged letters, and Guyton spoke at a youth event at Maranatha in October 2010. His 13-year-old daughter, Andrea Guyton, came with him and learned to play Dutch Blitz from Maranatha teens she now hopes to see at Pittsburgh 2011.

"I really like the chance to see people you maybe haven't seen in a while or since the last convention. It's like a big family reunion," says Andrea Guyton. "I think everyone should get a chance to experience convention."—*Jessica Farmwald for Mennonite Church USA. Pittsburgh 2011, the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, will be held July 4-9 in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh.*

EXPERIENCE THE

Homespun Delight

OF AN AMISH COMMUNITY


THE ROSE TRILOGY
the JUDGMENT
BEVERLY LEWIS
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

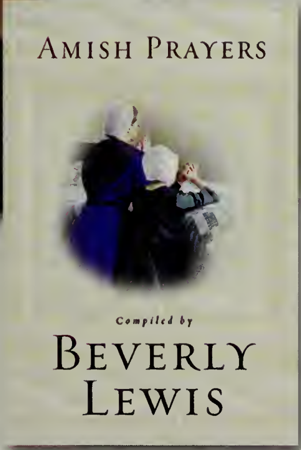
On Sale Date: April 5, 2011

New from
NY Times Bestselling Author
BEVERLY LEWIS!

As two Amish sisters struggle with the desires of their hearts, will they find the love and acceptance they long for?

The Judgment by Beverly Lewis
THE ROSE TRILOGY # 2

Also available: *The Thorn* by Beverly Lewis
THE ROSE TRILOGY # 1


AMISH PRAYERS
Compiled by
BEVERLY LEWIS

A collection of inspiring prayers used by the Amish and Mennonites for over 300 years—compiled by America's favorite author of Amish fiction, Beverly Lewis.

Amish Prayers
compiled by Beverly Lewis

A HALLMARK CHANNEL ORIGINAL MOVIE PREMIERE
Coming This Spring
Hallmark CHANNEL

DON'T MISS
Beverly Lewis' The Shunning!

BETHANYHOUSE

www.bethanyhouse.com
A Division of Baker Publishing Group

'Pittsburgh Experiment' may mean few resolutions

When delegates meet at Convention 2011 in early July, they will be asked to sign on to something called the "Pittsburgh Experiment." If the delegates agree, this year's assembly and the 2013 assembly will have few resolutions upon which the delegates act.

On Feb. 8, Mennonite Church USA's moderator-elect Dick Thomas released a document that outlined what actions are required of the Delegate Assembly according to the bylaws of Mennonite Church USA (see box), questions that have been raised about the purpose of resolutions, the "formal bodies" from whom the Executive Board has received counsel about resolutions and the history of resolutions at delegate assemblies.

"Numerous [people] and groups across our church have raised questions," says the statement, "both about the process that is used to develop and adopt assembly statements and the subsequent use of those statements. ... We do not have a uniform understanding of the locus of authority in the church. Some [people] want the denomination to answer questions that by our polity and by history have been left to a more local setting."

Church statements passed by the delegate body are viewed differently by different people and parts of our church.

The Feb. 8 document includes the following comments and questions:

- Delegates should have [resolutions] ... in advance of the assembly to allow time for them to engage in prayer, study and discernment as individuals and as a congregation. Numerous delegates have shared that there is not adequate time for spiritual discernment when assembly statements are presented only a day or two before they need to be adopted or rejected.
- Church statements passed by the delegate body are viewed differently by different people and parts of our church. This leads to frustration on the part of those who feel the statements have not received adequate serious attention by the denomination after they have been passed.
- There have been questions as to whether delegates have enough time to talk and listen to each other about a broad range of items impacting the church if the assembly time is focused on necessary reports, business and a few church statements. How might delegates be given better opportunity to respond to program priorities of the Executive Board and give direction to planning for the upcoming biennium?

Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, will preside over the Delegate Assembly at Pittsburgh 2011.

Dick Thomas is moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA and will become moderator in July.

- Our church polity is basically congregational, with significant authority vested at the area conference level. Therefore, if church statements are to produce the desired outcome, they may need discernment at the congregational/conference level as well as by delegates at an assembly, either before or after delegate action. Change from the top-down does not work well in a congregational/conference based denomination.
- Many wonder whether resolutions raised from the floor appropriately reflect the most important and fundamental questions and concerns of the denomination as a whole and whether resolutions provide the best beginning point for spiritual discernment.

Among the formal groups raising questions about resolutions was the Resolutions Committee itself.

"Members of the Resolutions Committee," says the Feb. 8 document, "have questioned a process that allows resolutions to come rather late during an assembly that require significant discernment or that, if adopted, will require significant resources and/or staff time for which adequate dollars may not be available to fully implement."

The Columbus 2009 Listening Committee also raised questions about the resolutions process used in the past and said, "Delegates wish to be engaged in discernment earlier in the week and to be more fully engaged in discerning the future direction of the church."

However, feedback from the September 2010 Leaders Forum—a joint gathering of the Constituency Leaders Council with the boards and top staff of all Mennonite Church USA agencies and entities—was mixed. According to the Feb. 8 document, those who participated in the Leaders Forum were generally affirmative of trying the Pittsburgh Experiment. But some raised cautions because:

- They perceive the proposed change as restricting the ability of delegates to provide guidance to church leadership.
- They worry that the purpose of the change is to keep specific questions and concerns from being raised in the delegate assembly.
- They believe that unless the Delegate Assembly takes specific action, there is no need to gather as an assembly.
- They believe that such a process fails to recognize the importance of having a widely accepted method of coming to agreement on matters presented for discernment—a vote by a majority of delegates (which is generally recognized in the U.S. society).
- They believe that discernment without action simply leaves decisions in the hands of a few leaders without a clear understanding of the strength of delegate understanding of issues.
- They find the current process exciting and interesting.

The Executive Board decided to move forward with the Pittsburgh Experiment despite such concerns and noted that the way delegates do business in the biennial assembly needs to be aligned more closely with other changes derived from a missional church vision.

"As we work more intentionally as a missional church," says the document, "our meetings for the work of the church are taking on less of a character of the society around us; they are increasingly focused on listening for the Holy Spirit, prayer, worshipful work, listening to each other and discerning together how we as a church will respond to God's love, care and concern for us and the world."

Consequently, the Executive Board is suggesting that Mennonite Church USA delegates consider an experiment that sets aside church statements and resolutions: "This will provide time to use the purposeful planning and discernment model (without the pressure of debating and adopting church statements by the end of either of those assemblies)."

—Everett J. Thomas

BYLAWS OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

Article V

Delegate Assembly

1. A Delegate Assembly shall be constituted as a denominational body representative of the constituency through area conference and congregational delegations. The Delegate Assembly, as a representative of the church, shall function in the following ways:

a. Provide opportunity to assemble for worship, fellowship, prophecy, acquaintance, and understanding, and to deepen Christian commitment.

b. Discuss and decide major issues of policy for the church denomination, and discern the voice and the Spirit in the midst of the Delegate Assembly.

c. Provide opportunity to speak to the establishment of general policies and the development of programs to carry out those policies.

d. Receive reports from the Executive Board, its committees, program boards, and councils. Reports shall be presented in writing and shall include financial accounting.

e. Review current programs and act on program priorities as presented by the Executive Board.

f. Elect the following:

i. Moderator, if the position is vacant, and a Moderator Elect.

ii. Four members of the Leadership Discernment Committee as nominated by the Constituency Leaders Council.

iii. Other members of program agency boards and committees as needed under the organizational structure of the same.

iv. Executive Board members to fill new terms and vacancies.

2. The membership of the Delegate Assembly shall be chosen as follows:

a. Each congregation of the Mennonite Church USA is eligible to send one (1) delegate for each one hundred (100) congregational members, or fraction thereof.

b. Each area conference of the Mennonite Church USA is eligible to send one (1) delegate for each one thousand (1,000) area conference members, or fraction thereof.

c. Each racial/ethnic group which has been officially recognized by the Executive Board, may send three (3) delegates plus one (1) delegate for each one thousand (1,000) members of such recognized racial/ethnic group.

d. Each member of the Executive Board is automatically a delegate.

e. Each appointing body may appoint one (1) alternate delegate for each five (5) delegates, or fraction thereof. Alternates shall be listed in order of preference, and shall be recognized by the Delegate Assembly in the place of official delegates unable to attend. Alternates shall receive the same mailings and materials as official delegates.

f. Subject to the limitations contained herein, each appointing body shall itself determine the criteria and term of its delegate(s), by what method its delegates are selected and whether and how it wishes to achieve continuity through its delegates. Each area conference delegate to the Delegate Assembly shall be a member of a congregation in that area conference. All delegates shall be members of congregations which are members (through area conferences or directly) of Mennonite Church USA.

g. Member area conferences shall be responsible to notify the denominational offices of the identity of area conference delegates and delegates for area conference member congregations.

Price tag of a future: $32,475

Everence counsels students on school loans and money management.

After graduating from high school, Cameron Voth wanted to invest in his future by enrolling at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan.

Now a Bethel junior, Voth feels the weight of that investment's price tag as he begins to pay back the student loans that paved the way for this future.

Learning to deal with that financial pressure as a faithful steward was the focus of a Bethel convocation, "Do Your Future a Favor," given by Ashley Hagelin Feb. 28 on behalf of Everence. Hagelin also gave the presentation during a chapel March 2 at Hesston (Kan.) College.

Hagelin, who works for Lutheran Social Services in partnership with Everence to provide free financial counseling, helped students view their finances through a Christian lens. It was a timely perspective for Voth, who, like many of his peers, soon will be paying back thousands of dollars in student loans.

"I am you in 10 years," Hagelin said. "I turn 30 years old next week. … After four years of making my timely graduated $75 per-month payment on a $30,000 loan, I got my student loan balance down to $32,475. … That was my first lesson in negative amortization."

Hagelin said this scenario is not uncommon among recent college graduates. She cited statistics from a *Wall Street Journal* article. Student loans outstanding today—both federal and private—total some $829.8 billion, according to Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of FinAid.org and FastWeb.com.

"For the first time Americans now owe more in student loan debt [$829.8 billion] than credit card debt [$826.5 billion]," Hagelin said.

Students at Mennonite colleges and universities are adding to this mountain of debt. But during her presentation at Bethel, Hagelin encouraged the students to tap into their faith and values and provided some helpful tools for their journey, including:

- Borrow only what you need.
- Be aware of how much you are borrowing.
- Keep your debts within the federal student loan guidelines, avoid private loans, if possible.
- Live below your means, now and in the future.
- Create and maintain emergency savings.
- Keep searching and applying for scholarships and grants as you move through your education.
- Intern and volunteer to gain experience.

Hope does exist within the grim landscape of debt repayment, including debt forgiveness within the federal student loan system, she said.

"If you work in a public-service job and make payments for 10 years, the remainder of your federal student loan debts can be forgiven," she said. "Even if you're not in public service, there's a limit to your financial servitude: Any remaining balance is forgiven after 25 years of payments."

Mennonite Church USA colleges and universities provide hope and help for students facing sticker shock and debt accumulation. For example, many Bethel students are graduating with up to $24,000 in indebtedness, but they receive scholarships to relieve some of the pressure, said Tony Graber, director of financial aid at Bethel.

"We provide an average of $11,700 in Bethel money to incoming freshman, but the average amount of 'free' money given to each freshman from all sources this past year was $16,700," Graber said. "That still leaves a lot of out-of-pocket expenses, when tuition and room and board for each year costs $30,000. Most families have not saved for college, and that means more student loans and even parent loans must be sought."

Financial realities are equally stark for private and public higher education. But students at Mennonite schools are more likely to receive one-on-one guidance in hammering out finances, Graber said.

Hagelin's presentation in Hesston College's chapel provided a refreshing jolt of practicality, said Todd Lehman, campus pastor. "I don't deal directly with students' financial life, but I know many of them stress about money," he said. "Students often say our chapels provide encouragement in faith but not enough in how to live out that faith daily. Hagelin gave them some nuts and bolts."

Classes also help students integrate faith and finances. For example, students who attended Bethel's convocation wanted to continue discussing student loans during a later class that day taught by Allison McFarland, professor of business and economics.

"Their anxiety over loans stems from a gap in the process: parents apply for them—but the students are responsible for paying them back," she said. "As parents and professionals, we have a moral obligation to help young adults better understand student loans and how to grapple with their realities."

Beryl Jantzi, director of stewardship education for Everence, agrees with McFarland that adults within the wider Mennonite faith family as well as within families at home have a responsibility to help young people integrate faith and finances. He joined Hagelin in the presentations at Hesston and Bethel. By sponsoring the convocation, chapel and a seminar on financial management for pastors in the Hesston and Newton communities, Everence hoped to buoy its efforts to inform, form and resource the next generation. *—Laurie Oswald Robinson for Everence*

Indonesians partner with Kenyans

Kenyan bishop says foreign missionaries' neutrality is a blessing in church plants.

Javier Soler

Yesaya Abdi, kneeling, is commissioned as the president of IMA. Standing from left: Paul Ma, Peter Xu, Melvin Fernandez, Steven Mangana, Antonio Ulloa, P.C. Alexander and Richard Showalter.

Kenya Mennonite Church is preparing to open a new church near the capital city, Nairobi. They have invited an expatriate missionary family to spearhead the project. Curiously, these missionaries are different from all the former and current Mennonite missionaries. They are Indonesians.

Over the past decade, Phillip Okeyo, a Kenyan bishop, has become acquainted with Yesaya Adbi, an Indonesian Mennonite pastor, through the International Missions Association. Last August, when the IMA met in Thika, Kenya, Abdi told Okeyo of a family in his church with a heart for missions in Africa. The Kenyan and Indonesian churches agreed to be partners in this Kenyan church plant.

"Foreigners are able to do certain things that local people can't," says Okeyo. "Of course, local people can do certain things that foreigners can't, but there is a legitimate place for outsiders in mission initiatives. Foreign workers have one focus: to strengthen the Kenyan church. They don't get caught up in our interethnic conflicts."

Multitribal churches face some challenges. The most common accusation is that pastors show favoritism to people from their own groups. It's precisely because of this tribal reality that Okeyo suggests a foreigner can be a blessing. "People from other continents can't even tell us apart, so they can't favor one group over another," he said.—*Debbi DiGennaro of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

CMU
CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The Board of Governors of Canadian Mennonite University invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective July 1, 2012.

CMU is an Anabaptist Christian university located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was chartered by the Province of Manitoba in 1998, and received membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada in 2008.

The President will lead CMU in accordance with its mission, vision and core commitments that are based on Biblical principles and rooted in Anabaptist-Mennonite and Evangelical perspectives, and will oversee all aspects of CMU including academic, student life, enrolment and marketing, administration and finance, development, strategic planning, and external relationships.

A full position profile and other details can be found at
http:/www.cmu.ca/presidential_search.html
Nominations or expressions of interest should be addressed to:
Ron Loeppky - Chair, Presidential Search Committee
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2 CANADA
Or sent by email to: **presidentialsearch@cmu.ca**

START
with faculty who know you

Our faculty know more than your name — they know you. Hesston College ranks in the 98th percentile for student and faculty interaction. It's one reason why when you start here, you really can go everywhere.

Hesston College
START HERE, GO EVERYWHERE

Only half million of 80 million bomblets removed

30 years later, MCCers are still removing Vietnam War-era cluster munitions.

One of Linda Gehman Peachey's earliest memories in Laos is visiting a family of 11 children whose mother had just been killed by a cluster bomblet while hoeing in her garden.

When Gehman Peachey and spouse Titus Peachey began working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Laos in early 1981, six years after the Vietnam War ended, fields literally were strewn with bomblets, tennis ball-size bombs originally held inside a U.S. cluster bomb. The Peacheys' five-year term started a lifetime passion to help the people of Laos deal with the 80 million unexploded bomblets.

In November 2010, the Peacheys returned to Laos for an international meeting of leaders opposed to the use of cluster munitions. Gehman Peachey, who is now director of the MCC U.S. Women's Advocacy program, didn't expect to visit another grieving family, but she did. This time she and several other meeting participants visited the home of a boy who was killed by a cluster bomblet the week before.

"I think what's distressing is that in 30 years, these injuries keep happening," says Gehman Peachey. "It's distressing that the reality is so present there, and it's so removed from those who caused the problem," she said, referring to the U.S. military, which reported dropping about 260 million cluster bomblets in Laos during the war.

Thirty years of work on removing cluster bombs in Laos and preventing their use has resulted in significant improvements, but the bomblets still cause far too many tragic stories, says Titus Peachey, now director of peace education for MCC. In 1994, Peachey helped start an unexploded ordinance project on behalf of MCC. This project, now administered by the Lao government, employs more than 1,000 people working for different agencies in nine different provinces. Nevertheless, the number of injuries and deaths from cluster bombs each year has stayed at about 300 people. And in spite of all the efforts, only a half million of the 80 million bomblets have been destroyed.

Today the Peacheys focus their efforts instead on prevention—stopping the bombs from ever being used. Peachey has actively advocated, on behalf of MCC, for an international cluster bomb ban. Peachey is also a board member of Legacies of War, an organization that advocates for increased U.S. aid to people affected by cluster munitions in Laos. *—Linda Espenshade of Mennonite Central Committee; Tim Shenk contributed to the article*

Biblical Commitment
Anabaptist Action
Jesse, making friends in Kenya

New online classes beginning Fall '11
ROSEDALE
BIBLE COLLEGE
www.rosedale.edu

BE MORE THAN A TOURIST

2011 TOURS

ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (April 27 - May 6)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 4 - 20)
LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE (May 11 - 24)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13 - 22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23 - July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22 - August 4)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (August 9 - 17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (September 19 - 28)
A PILGRIMAGE to PORTUGAL (September 20 - 30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22 - October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14 - 23)
From NAZARETH to ROME (November 10 - 22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14 - 26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7 -11)

2012 TOURS

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (February 3 - 23)
TOUR TO GUATEMALA (February 24 - March 4)
VISIT MEXICO & its COPPER CANYON (March 9 - 18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18 - 31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16 - 27)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3 - 16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3 - 13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10 - 23)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12 - 26)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

Radio station best in the nation

Goshen College's first time to win the national award

Goshen (Ind.) College's radio station, WGCS 91.1FM-The Globe, isn't a huge operation, but the sounds coming out of it are making a big impact.

Competing against all sizes of U.S. colleges and universities, the student-operated station was named on March 12 this year's Best College Station in the Nation at the 71st Annual Conference of the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System in New York City. IBS is the oldest college radio association in the country. The station's general manager, Jason Samuel, and a group of his students who work at the station were on hand to win the award.

Entrants seeking the award each submitted an audition recording featuring different kinds of programming, which was then reviewed by judges from across the radio industry. The Globe was selected along with DePaul University of Chicago as the overall finalists, and The Globe came out on top. This is the first time the college's radio station has won a national award.

"This competition is for all of IBS' members of all sizes. I like that we are all in the same pool, because when our students graduate and want to get a broadcasting job, they will be competing with everyone anyway," Samuel says. "Our students are committed to their craft, and being recognized by the IBS shows that they can compete with anyone for jobs at any level when they are done here."

Each week The Globe features a fresh and eclectic mix of Americana, alternative acoustic, folk, singer-songwriters and world beat music.—*Goshen College*

Discover South America!

Paraguay - Peru

Iguazu Falls, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies, Lima, Machu Picchu

September 23 – October 6, 2011

Contact Rudolf Duerksen at 1-204-415-6836
southway@shaw.ca
www.southwaytours.com

Award Winning

TWO-CYLINDER®
MAGAZINE

The Finest Publication Covering Vintage John Deere Tractors & Equipment

Membership in the Two-Cylinder Club® includes the bi-monthly magazine (each issue contains a quality product and service section, along with member-submitted Classified Ads); convenient no-charge access to our team of technical experts; discounts on books, DVDs, and other products; and the opportunity to obtain exclusive services such as Tractor Build Records.

We invite members of the Mennonite Community to join the many thousands of people from around the globe who are already members of the Two-Cylinder Club. Please visit **www.two-cylinder.com** for more information.

Membership is $34.95 per year.

Two-Cylinder • PO Box 430 • Grundy Center, IA 50638
Personal checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, and PayPal

Core market manager

Everence (formerly MMA) is seeking a core market manager to provide leadership of all Everence activities within the Newton, Kan., area market. Responsible for developing the market so individuals and organizations have the opportunity to integrate their faith with their financial decisions. Qualified candidates will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience (MBA preferred); proven management experience, preferably in delivery of financial services; proven negotiation skills; and significant sales and distribution experience.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; e-mail: hr@everence.com.

Everence

WORKERS

Dula, Michelle, ended service as Associate Pastor of Christian Formation at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Jan. 31 and began service as Associate Pastor of Congregational Life at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., on Feb. 20.

Myer, John B., was licensed as pastor at 3:16 Christian Community Church, Hickory, N.C. on Jan. 23.

Sommers, Michael, was installed as lead pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., on Jan. 30.

Voth, Cynthia, was ordained as Associate Pastor of Youth and Family Life at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Jan. 23.

OBITUARIES

Adams, Nancy Lee Cooper, 56, Sarasota, Fla., died Jan. 27 of flu and asthma complications. Spouse: Stan Adams. Parents: Jean Cooper. Children: Michelle Reed, Crystal Adams; three grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Alderfer, Rosa Marie Hunsberger, 83, Telford, Pa., died Feb. 1 of a stroke. Spouse: Paul M. Alderfer (deceased). Parents: Paul and Edna Ruth Hunsberger. Children: Ruthann Nice, Paul David, Dale B.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Allebach, Willard M., 90, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Emma S. Nyce Allebach. Spouse: Lourene Ziegler Allebach (deceased). Parents: Paul H. and Mamie Moyer Allebach. Children: Mary Lou Bechtel, Joyce Z. Ruth, Richard Z.; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Bachman, Joseph Alvin, 61, Bristol, Ind., died Jan. 29. Parents: Richard Christian and Lucinda Burkey Bachman. Child: Jillian Jo-Lee Bachman-Underhill. Funeral: Feb. 10 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Bauman, Jeffrey M., 25, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 26 of cancer. Parents: Philip and Connie Leinbach Bauman. Sibling: Mark. Funeral: March 5 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Berkey, Doris Jean Ours, 81, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 24, 2010. Spouse: Clayton Berkey (deceased). Parents: Fred and Marie Ours. Children: Judith Rose, Carl, Curtis; six grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Boldt, Marie Funk, 88, Reedley, Calif., died Feb. 3. Spouse: Gus Boldt (deceased). Parents: Peter F. and Elizabeth Penner Funk. Children: Edward, David, Larry; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Brubacher, Ivan, 83, Elmira, Ontario, died Feb. 12 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Eileen Martin Brubacher (deceased). Parents: Christian and Selina Brox Brubacher. Children: David, Dennis, Darlene Weber, Marvin, Mark; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Buehler, Vincent Grant, 65, Kitchener, Ontario, died Feb. 24. Spouse: Ruth Diehl Buehler. Funeral: Feb. 28 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Buller, Ruth Lehman, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 1, 2010. Spouse: Herman Buller (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Stella Sharp Lehman. Children: Marcia Glick, Royce; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 24 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Coffman, Vivian Burkholder, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 31. Spouse: David Coffman. Parents: Walter O. and Anna Belle Fulk Burkholder. Children: Glenna Hertzler, Joanna Rempel; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 4 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Detweiler, Lori Ann Godshall, 47, Telford, Pa., died Dec. 14, 2010 of cancer. Spouse: Wesley D. Detweiler. Parents: Elmer and Marian Moyer Godshall. Children: Tanner, Audrey Detweiler. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Fisher, Robert David, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Rachel Swartzendruber Fisher. Parents: D.J. and Ida Miller Fisher. Children: Julie Profeto, Suzette Prokopin, David, Lowell; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 30 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Freed, Hannah L. Landis, 85, Telford, Pa., died Jan. 18. Spouse: Allen B. Freed (deceased). Parents: Rein and Ella Landis. Children: Shirley Geiser, Elaine Burns, Nancy Beachy, Robert; 14 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford.

Gaeddert, Karen Kay Kaufman, 72, Leawood, Kan., died Jan. 28 of cancer. Spouse: James Dennis Gaeddert. Parents: Paul D. and Linda Lou Goering Kaufman. Children: Doug, Greg, Brad, Janelle Benninghoff; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite.* Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Gnagey, Allen Daniel, 84, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 30. Spouse: Donna Sauder Gnagey. Parents: Howard Daniel and Barbara Yoder Gnagey. Children: Keith, Faith Rupp, Brenda Aeschliman, Brent; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Gnagey, Donna Mae Sauder, 80, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 20. Spouse: Allen Daniel Gnagey (deceased). Parents: Harry and Viola Yedica Sauder. Children: Keith, Faith Rupp, Brenda Aeschliman, Brent; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Gockley, Lester W., 88, Rothsville, Pa., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Miriam Hess Gockley. Parents: Lester B. and Annie Wanner Gockley. Children: Lester W., M. Darlene Weaver; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Richard H. Heisey Funeral Home, Lititz, Pa.

Hackman, Naomi C. Souder, 95, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 21, 2010. Spouse: Floyd M. Hackman (deceased). Parents: Menno B. and Esther Clemmer Souder. Children: Mary Jane Souder, Earl Derstine; two grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel, Souderton, Pa.

Hartzler, Frank, 95, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 20. Spouse: Moneda Troyer Hartzler (deceased). Parents: Irvin and Susie Sutter Hartzler. Children: Mary Jo Short, Frank L., Jim; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Headings, Mary Louise Miller, 92, Steinbach, Manitoba, died Jan. 16. Spouse: Ivan Headings (deceased). Parents: Alf B. and Lovina Yoder Miller. Children: Richard, Patricia Sharp, Donella Keim, Roger, Robert; 12 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Birchwood Funeral Chapel, Steinbach.

Hostetler, Karen Kay Evans, 67, Wood River, Neb., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Ervin Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Wayne and Maude Lloyd Evans. Children: Eric Hostetler, Aron Hostetler; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at First Baptist Church, Cairo, Neb.

Jantz, Sylvia R. Andres, 80, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Wallace "Wally" Jantz. Parents: Peter Cornelius and Anna Richert Andres. Children: Jeff, Tim; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Kennell, Helen Marie Neuhauser, 92, Eureka, Ill., died Feb. 7 of a cerebrovascular accident. Spouse: Chester Willis Kennell (deceased). Parents: John E. and Laura Alice Slagel Neuhauser. Children: Jon, Judy Miller, Nancy Fisher; 10 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 11 at Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka.

Kinzer, Hazel Miller, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Paul Kinzer (deceased). Parents: John G. and Niva Christner Miller. Funeral: Feb. 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Landis, Elizabeth "Betty" Houser, 93, Lititz, Pa., died Feb. 5 of a stroke. Spouse: Lester E. Landis (deceased). Parents: Jacob R. and Susan Witmer Houser. Children: David H., Marian Funk, Lois Miller, Lester E. Jr., Betty Peifer; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb 11 at Landis Valley Christian Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa.

Limont, Naomi Charles Nissley, 91, Lancaster, Pa., died Dec. 5, 2010. Spouse: Alexander W. Limont. Parents: Frank and Mary Jessica Madden Nissley. Siblings: Rev. D. Lowell Nissley. Naomi was a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, coordinated with the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1950 and received her Master of Fine Arts at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. Memorial service: Dec. 13 at Homestead Village, Lancaster.

Herald Press

Setting the Agenda
MEDITATIONS for the ORGANIZATION'S
Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney

Setting the Agenda
Meditations for the Organization's Soul

There are a lot of books on personal spirituality, and lots of interest in spirituality in the workplace. But little attention has been given to the spirituality of nonprofit organizations. *Setting the Agenda* fills that gap, offering both a reflection on the meaning, importance and expression of spirituality in a nonprofit setting, and meditations that represent the moods and challenges facing nonprofit organizations.

"If you are a leader of an organization or a church; if you are serious about adding value to the process you are a part of; if you are looking for a new source of wisdom and power, both in your private life and in your public service—this book is for you."
—Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney

$15.99 USD/$18.50 CAD
www.mpn.net/settingtheagenda

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Martin, Ellen Risser, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 13, 2010. Spouse: Harold Martin. Parents: Irvin and Cora Meyers Risser. Children: Daniel, Jason; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Martin, Norma Mae Bauman, 71, Waterloo, Ontario, died Feb. 6 of cancer. Spouse: Laverne Martin. Parents: Absolom and Lydia Ann Bauman. Children: Fred Wagler-Martin, Bonnie Martin Gibson, Buetta Warkentin; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 10 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Miller, Lloyd R., 90, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Clara Irene Terwillegar Miller (deceased). Parents: Oliver J. and Alta Mae Mast Miller. Children: Norene Chesebro, Lana, Joyce Miller, Richard, John, Lynn, Philip; 17 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Roger C., 81, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 22 of respiratory failure. Spouse: Wanda Rhodes Miller. Parents: Thomas and Ruth Brenneman Miller. Children: Rebecca Carlson, Matthew, Michael; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

Mishler, Walter, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Thelma Goetz Mishler. Parents: Sanford and Millie Nussbaum Mishler. Children: Tammy Robison, Wesley; one granddaughter. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Moyer, Sanford S., 64, Harleysville, Pa., died Feb. 11 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Barbara L. Leatherman Moyer. Parents: Russell F. and Roberta B. Souder Moyer. Children: Lisa Kauffman, Cinthia Paul; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Nafziger, Edith Evelyn Swartzendruber, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 16. Spouse: J. Marvin Nafziger. Parents: Fred and Ella Augsburger Swartzendruber. Children: Myra Oswald, Diana Hershberger, Susan Bartel, John; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Nafziger, Gerald "Jerry" L., 75, Iowa City, Iowa, died Jan. 13 of cardiac complications. Spouse: Doris Gingerich Nafziger. Parents: Chris and Amanda Nafziger. Children: Jeff, Janelle Cheuvront; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Nussbaum, Roy Matthew, 78, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 29, 2010. Spouse: Florence Hershberger Nussbaum. Parents: Amos and Persis Amstutz Nussbaum. Children: Kay Shue, Rhonda Yoder; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Pankratz, Mildred Denniston, 79, Reedley, Calif., died Dec. 26, 2010. Spouse: F. Carl Pankratz (deceased). Children: Sheila Bonds, Sharon Perez, Mark, Eric; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Reedley Cemetery.

Pickard, Bonnie J. Triska, 59, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 10. Spouse: Larry Pickard. Parents: Richard and Margaret Elmore Triska. Children: Jeremy, Josh, Jeana King; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Ressler, Sadie Ruth Yoder, 80, Belleville, Pa., died Jan. 19 of a heart attack. Spouse: Ellis Leroy Ressler. Parents: John David and Annie M. Spicher Yoder. Children: Eileen Martin, Julie Nussbaum, Wilma Cender, John; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, North Lawrence, Ohio.

Discover what's next
Retirement living designed to enhance your life

Fran Kinney rediscovered the joy of volunteering at Dock Woods. She holds babies in the campus Children's Center.

Joining the Living Branches family has given Fran the opportunity to build new relationships and serve others.

What's next for you?

Visit www.livingbranches.org

Dock Meadows
Hatfield, PA
215-822-0688

Souderton Mennonite Homes
Souderton, PA
215-723-9881

Dock Woods
Lansdale, PA
215-368-4438

LIVING BRANCHES

Roupp, Nina G. Naffziger, 89, North Newton, Kan., died Jan. 27 of heart failure. Spouse: Weldon W. Roupp (deceased). Parents: Christian Lee and Isa Elizabeth Kauffman Naffziger. Children: Elaine Harms, Ken, Mary Regier, Ron; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schrag, Lorene Verna Goering, 94, Pretty Prairie, Kan., died Feb. 1. Spouse: Harvey Schrag (deceased). Parents: John P. and Anna Stucky Goering. Children: Carol Young, Anita Wingate, Marcella Webb, Allen; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie.

Schwartz, Victor L., 84, Elkhart, Ind., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Agnes Eicher Schwartz (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Leah Delagrange Schwartz. Children: Rosa Dirmyer, Mary Andersen, Miriam Gustin; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 23 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen, Ind.

Snider, Luella Hoffman, 84, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Feb. 4. Spouse: Bretton Snider (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Angeline Martin Hoffman. Children: Keith, Ken, Gary, Rick, Bonnie Naherniak; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Snyder, Leta Mae Miller, 85, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Don W. Snyder. Parents: John E. and Lucy Yoder Miller. Children: Donna Snyder, Joanne Lehman, Cathy Cameron; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 25 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Stuckey, Mary Elizabeth Liechty, 92, Leo, Ind., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Jesse M. Stuckey (deceased). Parents: Silas and Sarah Frey Liechty. Children: Jay; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at North Leo Mennonite Church.

Troyer, Jerold Paul, 42, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 31. Parents: G. Weldon and Frances Mumaw Troyer. Funeral: Feb. 8 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Troyer, Loretta H., 89, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 2. Parents: Eli E. and Rebecca Good Troyer. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Umble, Leon H., 99, Coatesville, Pa., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Melba R. Shetler Umble (deceased). Parents: John G. and Ada S. Kauffman Umble. Children: Mary Ellen Ness, Lawrence H., Dale L., Marian L. Umble, David L., Linda J. Umble, Ethel Jean Umble, Shirley Lambert; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Sandy Hill Community Church, Coatsville.

Waltner, Gene, 81, Marion, S.D., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Joyce Kaufman Waltner. Parents: John P.M. and Bertha Waltner Waltner. Children: Ken, Steve, Kristi Miller; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

White, Elsie Irene, 93, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 7. Parents: Elmer and Sadie Byler White. Funeral: March 19 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Wiens, Merlin Dean, 77, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 25. Parents: Jacob D. and Anna Marie Dirks Wiens. Children: Kevin L., Kenton D., Kari J., Karla J. Morici; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Make a difference in the world.

Study Public Health at Bluffton University.

Classes begin fall of 2011.

bluffton.edu/publichealth

RESOURCES

Redefining Duty: Stories of Alternative Service in the Name of Christ (Kern Road Mennonite Church, 2011, $6) contains the stories of 22 members or former members of the congregation who chose alternative service in lieu of military service from 1942 to 1970. The stories chronicle the service, the lives shaped by this choice, and candid reflections by interviewees about their choices. Order from krmc@krmc.net or 574-291-0924.

God and the Art of Happiness by Ellen T. Charry (Eerdmans, 2010, $35) reviews the history of the theological conversation about happiness and offers a constructive proposal for considering it anew.

Taking Your Soul to Work: Overcoming the Nine Deadly Sins of the Workplace by R. Paul Stevens and Alvin Ung (Eerdmans, 2010, $14) draw on the Bible, the Christian spiritual tradition and their own experiences in today's global business community to redefine the workplace as an arena for personal spiritual growth.

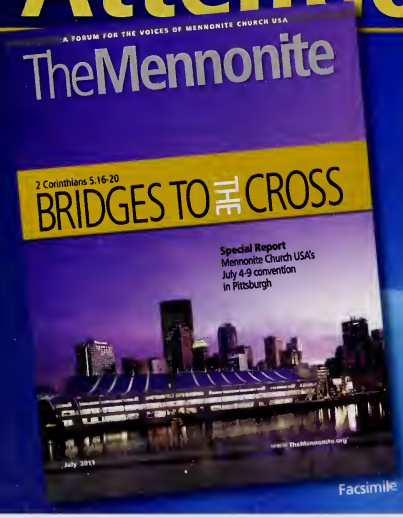
Jacob's Ladder: On Angels by Sergius Bulgakov, translated and introduced by Thomas Allan Smith (Eerdmans, 2010, $25), originally published in 1929, explores the doctrine of angels and their importance for contemporary humanity.

The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L'Arche Communities from Theology and the Sciences, edited by Hans S. Reinders (Eerdmans, 2010, $18), encourages people of all abilities humbly to acknowledge that to be human is to live with brokenness and limitation and that to experience true community we must first learn to receive other people as God's gift.

Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong by Conor Cunningham (Eerdmans, 2010, $34.99) puts forth a case for both creation and evolution, drawing on an array of philosophical, theological, historical and scientific sources to buttress his arguments.

The Meaning of Life by S.L. Frank, translated by Boris Jakim (Eerdmans, 2010, $25), originally published in Russian in 1925, is a distillation of Frank's bitter experience during the Revolution and his post-Revolution exile. It is about the search for meaning in suffering and displays a spiritual profundity rooted in personal experience.

The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation by Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff (Orbis Books, 2010, $35) asks how we can move toward a future where meaning, hope and beauty can truly flourish.



Attention pastors

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* **Pittsburgh 2011** issue available

Everyone in your congregation can read about the happenings at **Pittsburgh 2011** even if they don't receive *The Mennonite*.

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at **800-790-2498** or **Subscriptions@themennonite.org** to place your order. We will send your order in bulk at $2 per copy ($3 Cnd). Your order and payment **must be received by July 15**. No invoice will be issued at this low price. Send payment to *The Mennonite*, 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

TheMennonite

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

F	L	O	O	D		D	E	C	K	S		E		M
O		L			D			L		I	M	A	G	E
R	A	I	N	B	O	W		O	L	D		V		I
T		V			V			U		E	N	O	C	H
Y		E	N	T	E	R	E	D				R		U
	T		E			E		S	O	N	S			S
	W		P			U					P			E
G	O	P	H	E	R		I	M	M	O	R	T	A	L
A			I		A			E			I			A
R		S	L	A	V	E		N			N			H
M			I		E		M		S	I	G	H	T	
E	L	A	M		N	O	A	H			S		E	
N		R					I	A	R				N	
I	A	K	E		S	H	E	M		E	A	R	I	H

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time Discipleship Ministries Department Manager*** to oversee finances, policies and procedures, medical coverage and give other administrative assistance. Required: financial management/accounting experience, cross-cultural experience. Apply by April 13, 2011; begins May 18. See www.emm.org/employment.

Bound copies of
The Mennonite

Order a bound copy of
the 2010 issues of *The Mennonite*
for your church or school library.
Price: $90
Call Rebecca at
800-790-2498 or email
Rebecca@themennonite.org
to place your order.

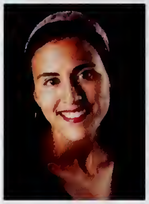
Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., seeks ***part-time (20 hours) minister of music and worship*** as well as a ***part-time (20 hours) youth pastor***. For further information about Swamp, as well as a job description, visit www.just-swamp.org or contact Cliff Mease at cjmease@gmail.com.

Allegheny Mennonite Conference seeks a ***full-time conference minister*** to provide leadership and vision to support congregations and pastors, nurture relationships with emerging congregations and help plan for mission from an Anabaptist perspective. Qualifications include experience as pastor in a Mennonite Church USA congregation, skills in team-building and leadership development, ability to evaluate, change and maintain structures. More information and job description from J. Lorne Peachey at peacheys@zoominternet.net.

Director of marketing: Join the management team of **Rockhill Mennonite Community**, a continuing-care retirement community in Sellersville, Pa. The marketing director will be responsible for analyzing target market segments and trends, reviewing strategic direction, developing and implementing the organization's marketing plan and executing marketing objectives for fill up of an under-construction Personal Care project as well as supervising sales associates to maintain maximum occupancy of 210 existing apartments and an adult day services program. The director will coordinate budget development and implementation of the department's budget. Applicant will drive initiatives and manage all advertising and communication efforts for organization including e-marketing, collaterals, media contacts and networking with local organizations to promote advancement of the organization's objectives. Qualified applicants for this key position must have excellent relational and communication skills and be able to understand and communicate Rockhill's mission and values. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline and at least 10 years of long-term-care marketing experience, along with strong technology skills. Complete compensation structure offered. Please forward detailed resume to Alan Landis, HR Director at alandis@rockhillmennonite.org. EOE

This whole Mennonite singing thing



Janet Trevino-Elizarraz is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

I have degrees in Bible/theology, taken a seminary course on Mennonite faith and polity and followed it up with studying Mennonite history, but none of this education has been able to teach me what I have yet to learn about Mennonite church life. It has taken me years to begin to appreciate what I assumed were just Mennonite traditions, many practices I believe come as second nature to most lifetime Mennonites.

Sometimes, this can be a frustrating journey because it's easy to criticize what one does not understand, and after being in the church six years and having served on the worship committee for two of those years, I've come to value the art of communal singing. Some lessons of faith and practice can only be learned while being in community and observing those who have walked the journey before me.

This is how I began to understand this whole Mennonite singing thing. Our church closed its doors on a Sunday in January to encourage parishioners to attend elsewhere, to experience the hospitality (or lack thereof) in other congregations. I have always admired the manifestation of God's Spirit in more charismatic churches, so our family visited a Spanish-speaking Church of God congregation. Here we remembered where we had come from before joining the Mennonite church and later realized what appealed to us about our local Mennonite congregation.

After downloading a decibel application on my iPhone, we quickly realized that the singing experience at the church we were visiting was within the range of being dangerous—within 90-95 decibels from the back section (higher for those in the front). Even though I'm confident we share the same heart in worshiping God, the sounds we heard from the speakers were noise. Present with our two smallest children, we asked the ushers for cotton balls for their ears. Through this experience, I reflected on the purpose for how the Mennonites in my congregation sing.

Experiencing this contrast in worship came days after I was writing my recommendations for a new worship-singing study being created by the Binational Worship Council. The chapter I had the most difficulty with was the one on congregational singing. It was embarrassing to admit I had felt distant with my singing experience because I had not yet understood the role of singing beyond the individual's benefit. What was the purpose of corporate singing?

The following Sunday, as I talked with my pastor about my hospitality experience in general, she unknowingly spoke to the questions I had left unanswered. I understood from her that a potential problem with the whole rock band singing experience is that it relegates it to a performance, with the audience as passive participants. I'd add that in general the experience may be passive when it comes to worshiping with your neighbor, but for the participant the worship work can be active in developing one's individual relationship with God.

The act of singing models interdependency.

Unfortunately, what has been forgotten by my Evangelical brothers and sisters is what my pastor taught me as the purpose of singing in a traditional Mennonite community: Without the ability to hear other voices, this singing "conversation" with your neighbor doesn't happen. As in most life situations, being wholly present in the moment allows us to respond more fully—as well as in singing—because in being completely present the worshiper opens to the Spirit as well as to her neighbor so as to create one voice among different pitches and rhythms. This practice symbolizes how the work of community is birthed and developed. The act of singing models interdependency and God's intention for how community works—the constant adjustments as we enter life's crescendos and the discipline of working to stay on pitch together. It is our weekly experience of what God desires for us as the body of Christ.

I had never understood this before. I didn't know that a simple act of singing together could hold such purpose and theology in the flesh. It is only unfortunate that it has taken me this long to understand the value of song, and I lament the countless times I've lost the blessing of a singing community because I was present elsewhere.

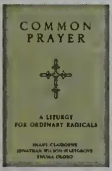
As you sing with older and newer Mennonites in your midst, find ways to speak the theology you so beautifully live so as to find even more worshipers who are creating community with you in song. TM

FILM REVIEW

Another Year (PG-13) follows a married couple in London who manages to remain happy into their autumn years while surrounded over the course of the four seasons of an average year by friends, colleagues and family who suffer unhappiness and loneliness. How refreshing to see ordinary life portrayed with plain-looking characters (no pretty faces)! Lesley Manville is particularly outstanding in this poignant film from Mike Leigh.—*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS

Take Our Moments and Our Days



Two new prayer books offer help to those interested in Christian daily prayer. **Take Our Moments and Our Days, Volume 2: An Anabaptist Prayer Book Advent through Pentecost**, compiled by Arthur Paul Boers, Barbara Nelson Gingerich, Eleanor Kreider, John D. Rempel and Mary H. Schertz (Herald Press, 2010, $34.99) This second volume is for the seasons of the Christian year (Advent through Pentecost). It gives priority to Jesus' words and includes helpful notes for how to use it. Unlike some, it includes hymn suggestions and emphasizes communal reflection on Scripture, though it can be used for individual prayer as well. **Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals** by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and Enuma Okoro (Zondervan, 2010, $24.99) is larger and includes more explanatory features. It also covers the entire church year and includes a theme for each month plus notes from Christian history with many of the days.—*gh*

Seasoned with Peace Spring, compiled by Susan Mark Landis, Lisa J. Amstutz and Cindy Snider (2011, $15.95) is the second such collection of devotions, poems, pictures and recipes for each day (April-June) to encourage peacemakers.—*gh*

Prayers and Lies

Apparently it is still possible for regular people to hit it big with a first novel. That is now happening to a friend of mine.

Sherri Wood Emmons did not set out to write a novel. Instead, she wanted to record some childhood memories of her family's visits to relatives in rural West Virginia. But over six or seven years, the memoir turned into a novel. On Feb. 1, Kensington Press released *Prayers and Lies*.

"On publication day," Sherri said on March 8, "my husband and I drove from bookstore to bookstore in [Indianapolis], taking pictures of the book on the shelves. That was pretty exciting."

Sherri was an editor with the now defunct *DisciplesWorld* magazine. I learned to know her through Associated Church Press conventions. We traveled with others to Jordan in 2005 in a press tour sponsored by the Jordan Tourism Board (Dec. 6, 2005). I took a picture of her mock-wrestling Jim Rice, managing editor of *Sojourners*, beside the creek purported to be the one where Jacob wrestled with the angel. Sherri was the angel.

About the time *DisciplesWorld* was ceasing publication and she would lose her job, Sherri learned that her book agent had two publishers bidding against each other for her novel. It ended in 2009 with an $80,000 payday and a two-book deal. After reading the novel, I can see why both publishers wanted it.

The novel follows Bethany, the main character, from her childhood in the Coal River valley into high school. Bethany is close to her cousin, Reana Mae, an odd-looking child who mostly just stares at people without expression. The two girls are oppressed by Bethany's older sister, Tracy. But we know from the beginning of the story that Reana Mae will eventually retaliate against the incredibly mean Tracy.

I asked Sherri what it is like to suddenly be a successful novelist.

"Since the book was released," Sherri said, "I have been doing signings at area bookstores. These are a lot harder than I thought they'd be. People show up expecting to meet an author, and what they get is just me. I do a reading, talk a bit, answer questions and then sign books. Sometimes, I feel like I'm a fraud, but so far people seem happy."

One test for fraud is whether the expressions, syntax and dialect of a region—in this case Appalachia—sound right. In nearly all cases, Sherri's do, particularly in the descriptions of mental illness as "bad blood."

Another test for authenticity is the integrity of the narrator's voice. I have not yet read a novel, written by a man with the main character a woman, where the characterization rings true. Nor have I read a novel, written by a woman with the main character a man, that sounds authentic.

But a strength of *Prayers and Lies* is that the thoughts, actions and dialogue Sherri created have authenticity. For anyone interested in Appalachia, this novel will provide a window into that uniquely American culture.

Prayers and Lies currently is on two "Top 100" lists. It ranks 35th for the Literary Guild and 38th with the Doubleday Book Club. But these are not what mean the most to Sherri.

"By far, the most rewarding thing about the entire experience was putting the finished book in my father's hands and knowing that he is proud of me," Sherri said.

So am I, friend, and I am eager to read that second novel when it is finished.

Everett Thomas is editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Gladys Alderfer, Sellersville, Pa.
Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Amanda Bartel, Wichita, Kan.
Arva Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Brady Bigler, St. Thomas, Pa. Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Mark Boshart, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Judy Dintaman, Howe, Ind.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Bernice Esau, North Newton, Kan.
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
Sarah Geiser, Apple Creek, Ohio
Christopher Gering, Ritzville, Wash.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Joyce K. Graber, West Unity, Ohio
Bonnie Handrich Venhuizen, Isle, Minn.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Verna Helmuth, Sarasota, Fla.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Joyce Hofer, Freeman, S.D.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Marvin & Ruth Kaufman, Broadway, Va.
Dorothy Kingsley, Amenia, N.D.
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt. Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Esther Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Richard & Shirley Mast, Graham, N.Y.
Erma Maust, Sarasota, Fla.
Joe & Jane Miller, Mount Union, Pa.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcille Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Miller, Lakewood, Colo.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Al Neuenschwander, Berne, Ind.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Anna Nolt, Quakertown, Pa.
Mary Helen Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Howard Piggee, Fredericksburg, Va.
Ella K. Regier, Newton, Kan.
Fancheon Resler, Bluffton, Ind.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Elvira Schierling, Denver, Colo.
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Lavera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Debra Selzer, Canton, Kan.
Esther Shaum, Engadine, Mich.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Ethel Slabaugh, Sturgis, Mich.
Kathy Smith, Archbold, Ohio
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Dorcas Steider, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Bonnie Stuckey, West Unity, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Eileen Wenger, Leola, Pa.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Elmer Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Yoder, Huntington, Pa.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Joyce Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

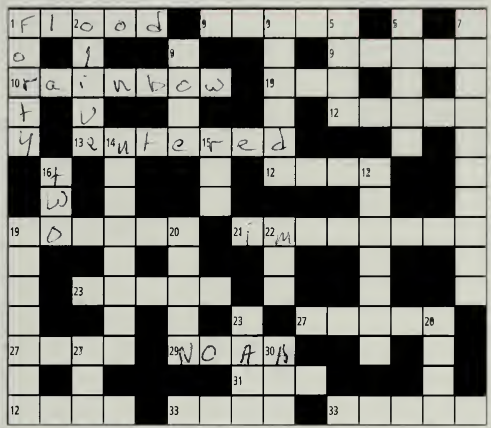
Do you know Noah?

By Jeanette Baer Showalter

All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS
1. Deluge.
3. The ark had lower, middle and upper ___
9. "… for in the ____ of God has God made man." (Gen. 9:6).
10. This is the sign of God's covenant to not flood the earth again.
11. Genesis 6:4 mentions the "heroes of __ , men of renown."
12. Noah's great-grandfather who was taken away by God
13. "And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives ____ the ark to escape the waters of the flood." (7:7).
17. Noah had three of these.
19. The King James Version states the ark was made from this wood.
21. Man is mortal, not ____ . (6:3).
23. "May Canaan be the ___ of Shem." (9:26).
25. "Now the earth was corrupt in God's ___ and was full of violence." (6:11).
27. He is the first son of Shem listed. (10:22).
29. He was righteous and blameless and walked with God.
31. The pitch used on the ark is similar to this substance.
32. The Lord told Noah, "___ with you seven of every kind of clean animal …" (7:2).
33. Noah's son listed in the ancestry of Jesus
34. "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the ___ …" (6:6).

DOWN
1. Number of days and nights it rained
2. The dove returned with this leaf.
4. "I have set my rainbow in the ___ , and it will be a sign …" (9:13).
5. "Put a door in the ___ of the ark …"
6. "But Noah found ___ in the eyes of the Lord."
7. Noah's famous grandfather
8. The second bird Noah released from the ark
14. These were the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men; called giants in the KJV.
15. Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, ___, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abram
16. "You are to bring into the ark ___ of all living creatures …" (6:19).
18. "—On that day all the ___ of the great deep burst forth …" (7:11).
19. Shem and Japheth covered their naked father with this. (9:23).
20. This was the first bird sent out from the ark.
22. "When ___ began to increase in number on the earth …" (6:1).
24. Noah was told to take a male animal and its ___ .
26. Noah lay uncovered in his ___ when one of his sons came in.
28. It was 450 feet long.
30. The father of Canaan (9:18).



RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our June 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

May 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the crossword puzzle can be found on page 57.

(Continued from page 5)

miracle was to make a lot more wine so the wedding celebration could continue after the guests had already drunk up all the wine.

Just as there is a sin of drunkenness, there is a sin of gluttony, greed and lust. Some are aware and some in denial about which of these holds too much power over us. Thank God for all God's good gifts, but worship and serve only the Giver and not the gift. *—Duane Beachey, Whitesburg, Ky.*

I was disappointed with the article about winemaking in the January issue and also with the editorial in the February issue. The logic used was that if the majority is doing something, it is OK, rather than what the Scripture says about an issue. I know Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for the stomach's sake, but that was before Pepto Bismol and other remedies. Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-32; Leviticus 10:8 and Ephesians 5:18 clearly speak against the use of strong drink. We need to hear more Scripture from our pulpits and church literature.*—Dean Swartzendruber, Kalona, Iowa*

For more than five decades, I have been reading *Gospel Herald* (now *The Mennonite*) consistently and with pleasure and appreciation. However, I was deeply disappointed to have our official denominational paper approve and seemingly promote the use of an alcoholic beverage. I am saddened when I think of the many whose lives were devastated by the use of alcoholic beverages. Yes, some of those have even been a part of our Anabaptist heritage.*—Ben F. Lapp, Watsontown, Pa.*

I, with others, was disappointed that you printed the article about the Virginia couple making and selling wine. To my knowledge the Mennonite church has never supported or endorsed the use of wine as a beverage. I think that anyone producing, selling or promoting it should be required to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings to hear how the abuse of alcohol destroys marriages, families and businesses. They should also take some responsibility for the cost to the larger society. The problems created by its use far outweigh the medical benefits.*—Chester Fath, Dalton, Ohio*

First Thessalonians 5:22 (KJV) says: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Might this Scripture be speaking to the use of alcohol?*—Zella Kauffman, Souderton, Pa.*

The article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January) quotes Curt Hartman as saying that perhaps people are adopting "a more European or biblical view" regarding acceptance of alcohol. Perhaps it would be good to remember that church attendance in Europe is in serious decline, and few of our traditional American Mennonite churches are growing.

I'm not suggesting that we go back to the strict rules that regulated dress, technology and alcohol in the Mennonite church years ago. However, I fear that in this enlightened, progressive age, people who are hungry for spiritual truth won't be attracted to our churches if we give the impression that church is just a grand social club. I'm disappointed if this is the impression given to someone just glancing through the article or to a newcomer to the Mennonite church.*—Sharon Shenk, Waynesboro, Va.*

I don't know which is more disappointing, that the Hartmans are devoting their considerable talents and energy to the production of wine or that no one in their home congregation seems to have a problem with it, as reported in the January issue of *The Mennonite*. I suggest the Hartmans spend some time visiting a rescue mission in a nearby city and meet some of the people whose lives have been ruined by the consumption of wine."*—John E. Eby, Lancaster, Pa.*

Thanks for publishing the article "Mennonite Couple Opens Winery in Virginia" (January). Hopefully the article will open good dialogue between the traditional view and the progressive view of "responsible" drinking within the church. The traditional view often ignores that Jesus' first recorded miracle was "making" wine and that Holy Communion includes wine. Wine is perfect with a formal meal with friends, a symbol of celebration of life.

I do respect people's view to not drink alcohol in support of people who have drinking problems. But I pray these brothers and sisters will be able to try to persuade and not condemn others who differ from them.*—Melvin Esh, Philadelphia*

Mennonites and alcohol

Regarding "Mennonites and Alcohol" (February): True, Jesus turned water into wine, but the world has changed. In Bible times a drinker jumped on his donkey or camel and hurt no one. In our day we have two lethal devices—the auto and the gun. My wife and I recently attended three events: a funeral in Atascadera of a young mother killed by a drunk driver, a suicide service in Pasadena and a court hearing in San Diego of a young man who was sent to jail for his third DUI.*—Albert H. Epp, Bakersfield, Calif.*

I was disappointed in the editorial on Mennonites and alcohol. Not only does the trend toward more use of alcohol bother me but also the shortcomings in the editorial. Many pastors know the pain of ministering to a family who has lost a son or daughter in an auto accident due to drunkenness, the pain of working with family members abused by a drunken man and the pain and struggle of families who go to bed hungry because someone used the family income for alcohol. Addressing the problem of alcohol abuse would be more appropriate than comparing social drinking with changes in dress patterns.*—Paul M. Zehr, Lancaster, Pa.*

Investing in hope The hope of our calling

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.—Ephesians 1:18 (TNIV)

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.—Ephesians 4:4 (TNIV)

God intends that the church be a hopeful place. The Apostle Paul often spoke of that hope and made great effort to help others comprehend it. Paul's hope was inextricably linked to the person and work of Jesus Christ. It was based on the certainty of God's calling, not merely on some weak and wishful thinking on the part of believers.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reflected on the ways they had once lived in darkness, without hope and without God in the world (4:18, 5:8). And he prayed that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened. Perhaps Paul was reflecting on his own conversion, thinking of the way scales fell from his eyes when Ananias prayed for him (Acts 9:18). It is possible, as Paul implies, for even believers to be virtually blind to the hope that God has in store for them.

In hope we cast our gaze to the future, to the grand consummation of salvation, the summing up of all that Jesus Christ can and will make possible for those who put their trust in him. The promised treasures of the heavenly kingdom provide security to the believer, a sense of assurance that God will make good on every promise in Scripture. This hope rests not merely on human endeavor but on God's initiative. It is fueled not by mere human optimism but by God's action in the world. It is a spiritual vision perceived by the "eyes of the heart."

However, true followers of Jesus Christ do not merely rest in the hope of eternal salvation, the confidence that we will escape punishment and win God's eternal reward. The hope of our calling also has a present dimension, shaping our lives toward noble ends in the present world. That is why Paul encouraged the Ephesians to live a life worthy of the calling they have received.

He wanted them to walk the path of life with assurance that they were called and loved by God. He longed for their hope-filled calling to make a vital difference in their daily activities.

I also see hope writ large in Jesus' well-known invitation to the crowds at Galilee: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The call to come to Jesus for respite is also a call to work. It is a call to take up the yoke alongside Jesus, to learn from him and carry our share of the burden in the work of the kingdom. This is not a picture of an easy life but an "easy" or "well-fitting" yoke. This is a picture of God's grace, a calling to share both the security of eternal salvation and the significance of daily participation with Jesus in God's redemption of the world.

True followers of Jesus Christ do not merely rest in the hope of eternal salvation, the confidence that we will escape punishment and win God's eternal reward.

We have hope for the future because Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom of God. It was a foretaste of God's eternal reign. The good work that Jesus began among his early disciples will someday be consummated through the redemption of the whole creation, including us. Until then, we are called to invest in hope by following God's call to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

*******************************FIRM CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 936 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 PS
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 106
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

We need each other

Gordon Houser

Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and destitute.—Psalm 82:3

The Bible often mentions the poor. The word occurs more than 200 times in the NRSV. And it's clear from these verses that God wants justice for the poor. Yet for many of us, poor people remain hidden, both to our and their detriment. We need each other.

About a year ago, I became involved in Circles of Hope, an organization whose motto is, "Working to end poverty one family at a time." In general terms, here's how it works: A group of people in poverty (though not in crisis; they are screened by people) joins a "getting ahead class," where they learn how to set goals (financial, physical, social) and work at them. Meanwhile, a group of volunteers go through training to become "allies." This training, which I took, is similar to what's taught in the getting ahead class. We learned about the cultural differences between people in poverty and those in the middle class. We learned about generational poverty, about systems that keep poor people from escaping the cycle of poverty many find themselves in.

Community is a great agent in fighting poverty.

Many of those who graduate from the 15-session getting-ahead class become circle leaders. Each circle leader is joined by two to four allies, and they meet monthly to encourage the circle leader in meeting his or her goals.

I joined a circle group last September, and this whole process has been an eye-opening experience. Let me mention a few lessons I've learned.

Once a month the circle groups, including circle leaders and allies, plus other support people, meet at a local Methodist church for a meal that circle groups take turns providing. Then the circle groups meet for an hour or so.

I began attending the monthly meals last summer, before I was assigned to a circle leader, just to get to know people. One evening, I sat at a table with my plate and introduced myself to a person at the table. He asked me if I was in the getting-ahead class. I loved the fact that we didn't automatically know who of us was in poverty and who was not. And I've come to see more clearly that but for some circumstances, I could easily be among those in poverty.

The woman who teaches the getting-ahead class once said, "Poverty isolates people." The genius of the Circles model is that it simply brings people together. As allies, we are not allowed to help our circle leaders monetarily, but we can offer encouragement and advice, if asked. More importantly, the wider a person's circle of acquaintance, the more resources are available. I may know someone with a used car for sale; another ally may have a contact that could lead to a job. Community is a great agent in fighting poverty.

I've also been amazed at the courage and fortitude of the circle leaders. My own leader not only asks us to hold her accountable for the goals she has set but has us set our own goals and holds us accountable for those.

We need each other.

The night before Jesus was killed, he took the position of a servant and washed his disciples' feet (John 13). After his death and resurrection, he visited his followers, who had scattered in fear, and drew them together, offering them peace and breathing on them the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). Later he said to Simon Peter, "Tend my sheep" (John 21:16).

James (2:5) says that God has "chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith." I've witnessed that richness and seen I have much to learn.

We have much to learn from each other.—*gh*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002634 1

mother mourning

May 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:
- A letter to my daughter
- Wise men and subversive women
- Parenting as spiritual discipline
- Why are gas prices so low?
- Beware of Big Brother and bias
- Unconventional conventions?

Looking for a fresh perspective on leadership?

An Anabaptist perspective on developing your own skills and those of the people you lead...

Values-based
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

This two-part program will not only strengthen your leadership skills but also provide opportunities for self-discovery.

- **Session 1: Leading from Inside**, September 20-22, 2011
- **Session 2: Leading & Empowering Others**, February 21-23, 2012

Both sessions at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania

Who should attend?

- Senior managers and leaders from business and non-profit organizations
- Executive and board leadership of schools, colleges, universities and seminaries
- Pastors and senior leaders from area conferences, congregations, and church-related organizations
- New executives and rising leaders from all fields

Values-based Leadership Program sponsors:

- Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Everence
- Laurelville Mennonite Church Center
- Mennonite Church USA
- Mennonite Economic Development Associates
- Mennonite Education Agency
- Mennonite Health Services Alliance
- Schmucker Training and Consulting

To learn more and to register, visit our new website: www.VBLP.org

TheMennonite May 2011 | Volume 14, Number 5

CONTENTS

12 **Mother mourning** —Laurie Oswald Robinson

16 **Honoring mother** —Ruth Yellowhawk

18 **A letter to my daughter** —Jenn Esbenshade

19 **Wise men and subversive women** —Dave Stevens

22 **Subversive mothers in the genealogy of Jesus**—Bert Newton

24 **Choosing to preach Christ** —Jonathan Emerson-Pierce

26 **Parenting as spiritual discipline** —Debbi (Diener) DiGennaro

28 **All things new** —Pam Nath

31 **Song weepers** —Lisa Schmucker Showalter

32 **Early challenges to capital punishment** —David W.T. Brattston

37 **Executive Board confronts funding troubles** —Anna Groff

41 **Young adults and retirees connect in Tucson**

43 **Conference leaders deal with differences** —Chris Rahe

46 **Why are gas prices so low?**—James M. Leaman

49 **Digital edition coming**—Gordon Houser

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
53 For the Record
56 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

6

ON THE COVER: Photo by Vaughn Lambert

TheMennonite
May 2011 | Volume 14, Number 5

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Help for Sudan's Christians

Thank you for the suggestions about church connections in the South Sudan (Editorial, March). The mission hospital that I am concerned about began as a small clinic built by a group from Grand Rapids, Mich., called Partners in Compassionate Care. After visiting Sudan many times, they have a lot of information about the complex problems that are part of South Sudan. They are located 100 miles north of Juba at a spot that is almost inaccessible for half of the year. It seems as if the Grand Rapids group has been too busy to find and connect with other Christian ministries in South Sudan.

In addition to providing medical care for almost 10,000 patients last year, this group is also trying to build peace between two major tribes in the area. They also would like to find a way to teach reading and English to the many adults in the area who are eager to learn. And they wish they would have a place where Christian pastors could receive much needed training.*—Betty Jeschke, Goshen, Ind.*

Are song books tainted?

For the past five years I have greatly benefited by having Randall Spaulding as my pastor at Covenant Mennonite Fellowship in Sarasota, Fla. As the son of a pastor, a seminary graduate and an ordained minister, I believe I have sufficient knowledge and experience to judge pastoral leadership. Randy has proven himself to be an outstanding pastor and more effective than most pastors I have known.

But then a year ago, the Southeast Mennonite Conference took away his credentials, not because he was ineffective but because he was gay. Randy also served the Mennonite church by being project editor on the hymnal supplements *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. He was also on the binational worship council until he was recently expelled, presumably because his gayness would taint Mennonite music.

Does that mean that all copies of *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story* are also tainted and should be recalled or destroyed? Do those decision-makers assume that their God is not able to work effectively through a highly talented pastor and musician whom God created gay?*—David A. Ryan, Sarasota, Fla.*

Editor's note: *When a letter-writer criticizes a Mennonite Church USA leader or institution, it is our practice to invite (at our discretion) the institution or leader to respond in the same issue. Executive Board staff member Terry Shue and Mennonite Publishing Network executive director Ron Rempel elected to respond through the article on page 48.*

Pacifism needs updating

Melissa Florer-Bixler's response to my article on pacifism misrepresents my work and writing (Letters, March). I do not think the church and state worked in a complementary way, nor do I subscribe to Calvinist beliefs.

The point of my article ("Confessions of a Modern-Day Pacifist," February) was to encourage Mennonites to be more pacifist, not less. We should question and critique government and military policies and practices. But we should also point the fingers at our own lifestyles and in our own practices of calling armed police.

Pacifism needs updating because Mennonites living in North America do not face the same type of repression that they did in earlier empires. Many

Mennonites pay taxes, use public services and call the police but then want to offer a purist critique from afar, without meeting government and military staff in person to share our different point of view. We can only be consistent in our pacifism if we look both at our own behaviors and lifestyles as well as those of the government.

As to Florer-Bixler's critique that I am not Anabaptist: I have lived in Mennonite communities and attended and worked for Mennonite institutions my entire life. I believe my life and work fully attest to the Anabaptist identity I embrace.—*Lisa Schirch, Harrisonburg, Va.*

What about guns?

The letters objecting to a story about a Mennonite winery didn't surprise me (February, March and April). What interested me was a letter that called attention to "being part of an industry that leads to ... death [and] injury" of thousands.

I wonder why we don't seem to have as much concern and outcry about the mistaken and intentional deaths and injuries caused by the guns we so glibly claim to have the right to own and bear—and, therefore, are part of the gun industry?—*Audrey A. Metz, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Few resolutions

Regarding "'Pittsburgh Experiment' May Mean Few Resolutions" (April): Since it is a dramatic departure from accepted practice and since it will be difficult to ensure that all delegates have sufficiently integrated the impact of the proposed "Pittsburgh Experiment," it would be more prudent to wait until the 2013 convention to implement this.

Groups that intend to network with others of like mind from distant locations across the church may find prohibitive the logistics of getting consensus from their group to draft a joint resolution ahead of time. Since the impact on the Delegate Assembly is akin to a constitutional revision, two years are warranted to implement such a major course correction.—*Eber Rice Smucker, Goshen, Ind.*

Mennonites and alcohol

The June issue will be the third and last issue in which we publish letters responding to the February editorial, "Mennonites and Alcohol." At the conclusion of those letters, we will provide a response. The letters here are published in the order we received them.—Editor

We have a concern with the tone and message of the editorial in the February issue related to alcohol. It implies that, along with changes in other lifestyle traditions, it is time to accept its use.

For too many people, the possibility that alcohol use will progress to problem drinking and, for some, addiction, is very real and all too frequent. There are many other beverages to enjoy that would avoid the dangers.

Might another editorial be written to effectively express the potential related problems of alcohol use—in personal relationships, in emotional and physical disorders, in accidents and in the example we provide for our children as they develop their own attitudes and make life choices?—*Don and Marty Minter, Goshen, Ind.*

Usually I would rate the editorials in *The Mennonite* from good to excellent. But I was very disappointed in Everett Thomas' comments in the February issue.

It is technically true that the alcohol issue need not be a problem, but the fact is that it is a problem. So please, may the Christian church (as a Mennonite, I emphasize the Mennonite church), its leaders and its publications recognize both the fact and the seriousness of the problem and actively

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

May brings us Mother's Day, and our feature section includes the tragic experience of one mother: Laurie Oswald Robinson (page 12) describes the heartbreak of losing her two-year-old foster-to-adopt daughter in a court fight. The late Ruth Yellowhawk (page 17) brings a Native American perspective and says, "Honoring my mother means reconnecting with the earth, this grand and glorious mother who sustains us as special guests at her immaculate table."

Subversive women (page 19) and subversive mothers (page 22) focus on the way women in the Bible were able to do God's will against great odds.

Original reporting in the news section covers the financial troubles confronting Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board (page 37), a volunteer's work at a school for the deaf and blind in Jordan (page 38), and the dismissal of a binational worship council member (page 48).

At a time when gas prices seem to be climbing inexplicably, we publish James Leaman's News Analysis entitled, "Why are Gas Prices so Low?" (page 46).

Associate editor Gordon Houser's report from the spring meeting of *The Mennonite*'s board of directors announces our intent to make a digital version of this magazine available for subscribers who wish to read their copies on an electronic tablet (page 49). We hope to have such an electronic version available for the July issue; we will determine after six months whether there is enough interest among readers to continue.

The editorial (page 64) suggests Mennonite Church USA could consider a new pattern for its biennial conventions.—*Editor*

Mennonite workers in Japan send stories

ELKHART, Ind.—In the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami and the ongoing nuclear contamination threats that have befallen Japan, Mennonite Mission Network workers and associates from North America have been sending stories of their experiences and the relief efforts of the local Japanese churches.

Mennonite Mission Network has launched a website, www.mennonite-mission.net/stories/news/japan-earthquake/Pages/home.aspx, to highlight these dispatches.

Mission Network has one supported worker in Obihiro and four families of mission associates in other areas in Japan.

Mission Network also partners with the Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference and the Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches. According to the Mennonite World Conference website, there are nearly 3,000 Mennonites in Japan.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

GAMEO appoints managing editor, releases DVD

AKRON, Pa.—The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online Management Board met Nov. 20, 2010, in Akron. One of its first actions was to appoint Richard Thiessen of Abbotsford, British Columbia, as managing editor of GAMEO, effective January 2012, following the retirement of current managing editor Sam Steiner, whose term ends this year. Thiessen, library director at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, has been serving as associate managing editor of GAMEO since November 2006.

The board also learned a DVD edition of GAMEO was in preparation. The edition of 250 copies was released in March and includes all the encyclopedia's content through Jan. 19. Steiner, Waterloo, Ontario, said the target audience for the DVD edition was conservative Anabaptist groups who utilize computers but do not access the Internet. Some copies may also go to Mennonite groups outside North America, where Internet accessibility is limited. Steiner said the 2011 edition will be provided without cost, though donations will be accepted.

GAMEO is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference. It is available free at www.gameo.org and includes more than 1,800 contributors and 14,750 articles.—*GAMEO*

MennoMedia new name for integrated agency

HARRISONBURG, Va.—When Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media merge on July 1, the new agency will be called MennoMedia.

Jodie H. Beyeler, Goshen College

Checking identification

Paul Keim, professor of Bible, religion and philosophy at Goshen (Ind.) College, has his ID checked by student guards at the checkpoint as he attempts to pass through. Students built a miniature replica of the Israel/Palestine wall through part of campus March 10-11 to raise awareness of their concerns about its humans rights and environmental impacts. —*Goshen College*

That was the decision of the board that now governs MPN and will govern the new integrated agency.

The eight-member binational board voted unanimously to approve the name on April 8 during its quarterly meeting in Harrisonburg, where the main offices of MennoMedia will be located.

MPN is the publishing agency of both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Third Way Media is currently a program of Mennonite Mission Network and had programming and operations in Canada from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. MennoMedia will be binational.

The three brands, or imprints, are Herald Press books; Third Way Media productions in video, radio, the Internet and other media; and Faith & Life Resources, which are Sunday school and other resources for churches.

MennoMedia offices in Harrisonburg will be housed in what is now Third Way Media's building. While the largest number of staff—about 20—will be in Harrisonburg, there will also be staff in Canada (Waterloo, Ont., and Winnipeg, Man.) and in Newton, Kan.; Elkhart, Ind.; and other locations.—*MPN*

ADNet announces transfer of CAN

GOSHEN, Ind.—The Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) board has announced that it has transferred its Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN) project to Paul Leichty, ADNet's former executive director.

CAN offers web-based tools that enable congregations to examine how accessible they are to people living with a wide range of disabilities. Leichty oversaw the creation of the CAN project during his time with ADNet and plans to continue developing its potential to serve congregations of all faiths.

H. James Smith, ADNet board chair, says: "CAN's resources enable congregations to assess all congregational ministries—worship, education, leadership, facilities and more—for their accessibility to [people] with disabilities."

ADNet and CAN both encourage

Mennonite Disaster Service

MDS begins work in British Columbia

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteer Gerald Dyck helps hold a jet boat for a resident of Kingcome, British Columbia. Flooding of the Kingcome River on Sept. 25, 2010, devastated an ancestral, culturally rich First Nation community. Six months later, MDS began sending volunteer work crews into the remote community on the Kingcome Inlet. The first team of five skilled tradesmen traveled into Kingcome in mid-March and began the restoration process on two of eight homes.—*MDS*

faith communities to promote full participation of people with disabilities in congregational life.—*ADNet*

Mennonite Women USA increases scholarships

The International Women's Fund (IWF) is a Mennonite Women USA (MW USA) global church ministry that provides scholarships for Anabaptist women's leadership training across the globe. Fourteen women from Latin America and Africa received awards for 2011. The total amount for scholarships in 2011, $10,000, reflects an increase of $3,000 over 2010.

As the 2011-12 fiscal year begins, MW USA has taken a step of faith by increasing IWF scholarships, believing the extra funds will be made available through careful stewardship and gifts.

IWF scholarship recipients for 2011 are Blanca Richard, Paraguay; Valeria Alvarenga, Brazil; Mitzi Escorcia, Maria Palomares, Emilse Bobadilla and Laura Ruíz, Colombia; Elizabeth Vado, Fada Pérez and Maria Calderón, Nicaragua; Mimie Mukendi and Nathalie Kananga, Congo; Albania Molina, Honduras; Maricela Godinez, Guatemala; and Emila Amexo, Ghana.

These will receive leadership training to help them work in their communities with the church.—*MW USA*

Bethel to break ground for Academic Center

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—On March 15, Bethel College informed the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., that Bethel donors had met their latest Mabee challenge.

The resulting funds are for the transformation of the old Science Hall, built in 1925, into a new, state-of-the-art Academic Center. Construction will begin this spring, with an official groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for May 21.

The challenge, given by the Mabee Foundation in April 2010, was to raise $921,424 in gifts and commitments in one year in order to receive $725,000 from Mabee. Alumni and friends—more than 850—exceeded the goal, giving or pledging more than $1 million.—*Bethel College*

Mennonite Church Canada cuts staff

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—Difficult decisions about a smaller ministry and staff at Mennonite Church Canada were announced to staff here on April 11.

The reorganization will see a net budget reduction of $415,000 in hard and soft costs beginning Feb. 1, 2012. This includes a net loss of 3.4 full-time equivalent positions (FTE) of national church staff.

Two full-time positions at the executive staff level will be eliminated. Part-time direct ministry positions affected include the multicultural ministry director position, which will be eliminated, the youth ministries facilitator position, which will transition to contracted work on alternate years, when the youth assembly is convened, and the position of Christian nurture director will end.

Some affected staff have been invited to alternate roles as the national church reorganizes some of its ministry activities. Some of these alternate roles will be at reduced FTE. Affected staff were given notice effective Aug. 1. Severance policies are in place to assist released staff in making transitions.

The net reduction of about $415,000 will require raising additional funds in fiscal year 2012-2013 to comprise the approximate $500,000 projected total needed to balance the 2012-2013 budget.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

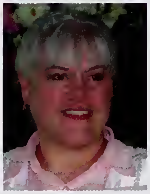
Connecting Families holds annual gathering

REISTERSTOWN, Md.—The 22nd annual gathering of Connecting Families was held March 18-20 at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown. The theme for this year's event was "One in Christ: Dividing Walls Destroyed."

Connecting Families welcomes families and supporters of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who seek a welcoming atmosphere in which to connect with others facing similar barriers, especially those who wish to remain connected to their church.

Connecting Families will next meet April 20-22, 2012, at the Pearlstone Retreat Center.—*Tom Chamness*

Changes



Donna Mast serves half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and half-time as interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Changes coming upon us
It keeps moving, moving around us
Got to keep dancing knowing
He loves us
*Got to keep joy in our hearts**

Seems like there are changes swirling all around me these days. Today, as I write, is our church secretary's last day with us. In her 10 years at this job she has seen multiple changes in church staff and structure. I will miss her. She has been a good secretary and an even better friend.

Other friends of mine are making plans to move due to changes in their husbands' employment. These families will be greatly missed in our congregation, and I will sorely miss having these friends in close proximity.

Congregations experience change on a regular basis. Change is a part of life. We grow older. The shoulders that regularly bore the weight of church responsibilities and tasks can no longer do so because of the changes that come with aging. New people come along to take up the responsibilities with fresh vigor and vision. While we rejoice that younger people are ready and willing to do the work of the church, the changes they implement are sometimes difficult for older ones to embrace.

God uses the changes of life to form us ever more into the likeness of Jesus, if we allow it.

He knows all of our needs and
He will meet them following His plan
Even the changes turning in His hand
*Soon will be part of it all.**

In Allegheny Mennonite Conference, we are planning for change in our structures. We have been in this process for several years. In March, we voted to try on the suggested changes for two years. We don't have all the details ironed out yet, which makes some uneasy. How will these changes affect our congregations? Will we truly be enabled to meet the changes in the society around us with this more flexible model? We don't know yet. Not knowing troubles some and excites others.

So we enter a new time
There are places where it's a hard climb
But there are faces carrying sunshine
*Warming our path as we go**

Change is inevitable. As you've read about some of the changes in my life, you probably thought about changes in your own. If we continue to live, we will experience change. We can go kicking and screaming into the change or we can seek God's desires in the midst of it.

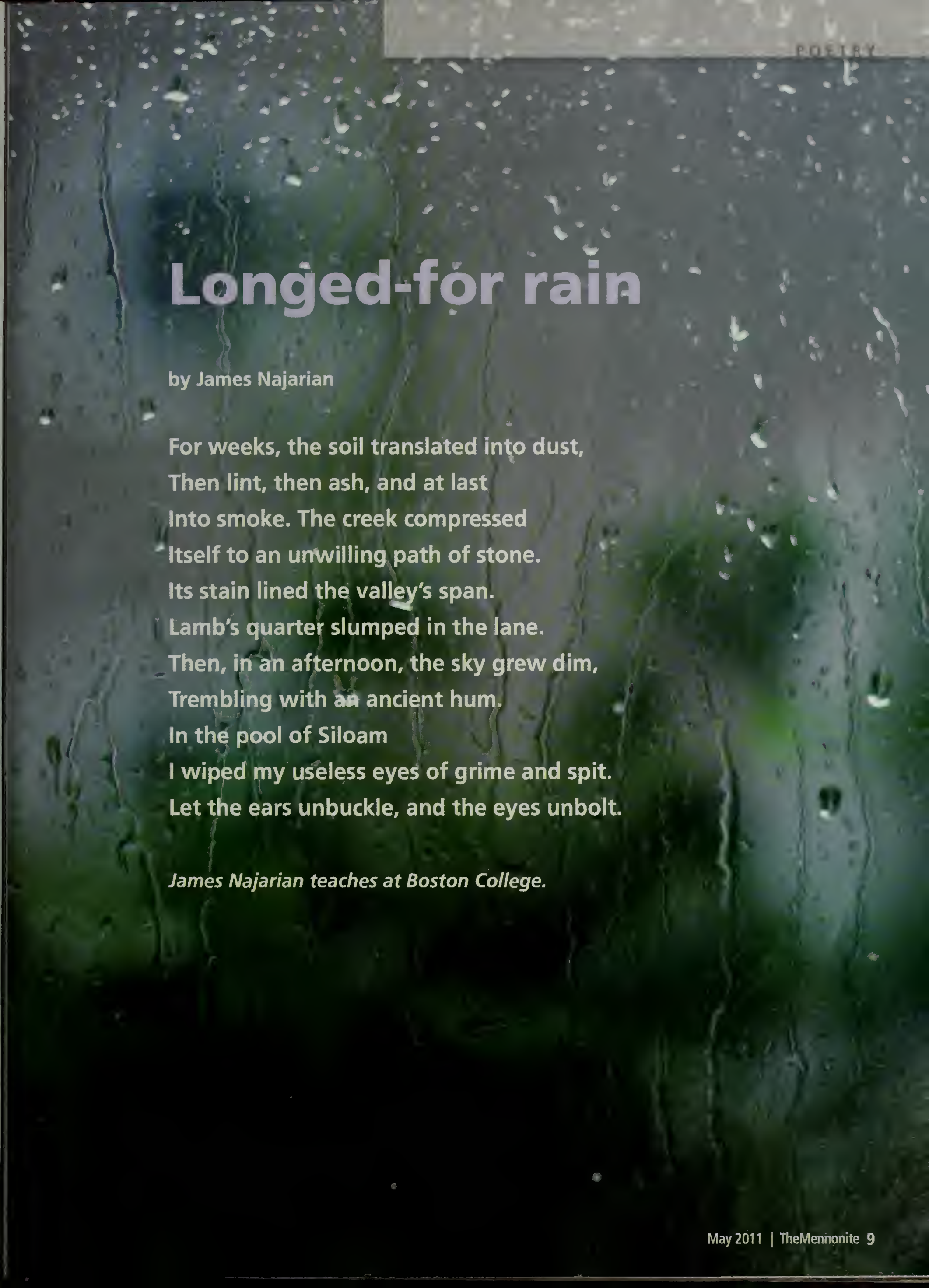
Our congregation has used a process called Appreciative Inquiry to help us think about change. It works from the standpoint that change will happen. When we focus on the best of who we've been in the past, we can move into the changed future with greater confidence. If Appreciative Inquiry were to have a theme verse, it would be Philippians 4:8: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

In the midst of change, it is not always easy to focus on what is true and pure and pleasing. But when we make it a habit to look for the honorable and just and commendable, it is easier to find the positives, even when the coming change is not a happy one.

Sometimes we may be lonely
It's a hard job making us holy
But in the long run there will be glory
*Glory to rival the sun**

God uses the changes of life to form us ever more into the likeness of Jesus, if we allow it. Living Philippians 4:8 is one way of cooperating with God in the midst of change. Praise God for this transforming power. TM

**These song lyrics are from "Changes" by Jim Croegaert. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*



Longed-for rain

by James Najarian

For weeks, the soil translated into dust,
Then lint, then ash, and at last
Into smoke. The creek compressed
Itself to an unwilling path of stone.
Its stain lined the valley's span.
Lamb's quarter slumped in the lane.
Then, in an afternoon, the sky grew dim,
Trembling with an ancient hum.
In the pool of Siloam
I wiped my useless eyes of grime and spit.
Let the ears unbuckle, and the eyes unbolt.

James Najarian teaches at Boston College.

Ironies and outrages: fasting to protest budget cuts to the poor

Taking their cue from Queen Esther, who called on the faithful to fast and pray for their Persian rulers to have a change of heart, a diverse coalition of religious leaders—from Bread for the World, World Vision, MercyCorps, Sojourners, the ONE Campaign and the Alliance to End Hunger—are calling on Americans of good faith to join them in fasting and prayer to protest proposed budget cuts that would jeopardize the poor, sick and hungry at home and abroad, according to Religion News Service. The effort was launched on March 29.

Joining around 4,000 others in the fast, Mark Bittman, a food critic, who wrote a piece in the March 30 *New York Times* called "Why We're Fasting."

The fast is a protest against proposed budget cuts by Congress to programs that help the poor. Bittman singles out House budget bill, H.R. 1, which proposes budget cuts "in the WIC program (which supports women, infants and children), in international food and health aid (18 million people would be immediately cut off from a much-needed food stream, and 4 million would lose access to malaria medicine) and in programs that aid farmers in underdeveloped countries. Food stamps are also being attacked, in the twisted 'Welfare Reform 2011' bill. (There are other egregious maneuvers in H.R. 1, but I'm sticking to those related to food.)"

According to an analysis of the proposed budget cuts by the ONE Campaign, cuts to the Global Fund would mean that

- 10.4 million bed nets to fight malaria will not be provided;
- 6 million treatments for malaria will not be administered;
- 3.7 million people will not be tested for HIV;
- 58,286 HIV-positive, pregnant women will not receive treatments to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV;
- 414,000 people will not be provided their antiretroviral (ARV) medication;
- 372,000 testing and treatments for tuberculosis will be halted.

Bittman also objects to these proposed cuts because, while they are supposed to reduce the deficit, "they'd barely make a dent" while causing "more people to starve to death, go to bed hungry or live more miserably than are doing so now." And, he writes, "the bill would increase defense spending."

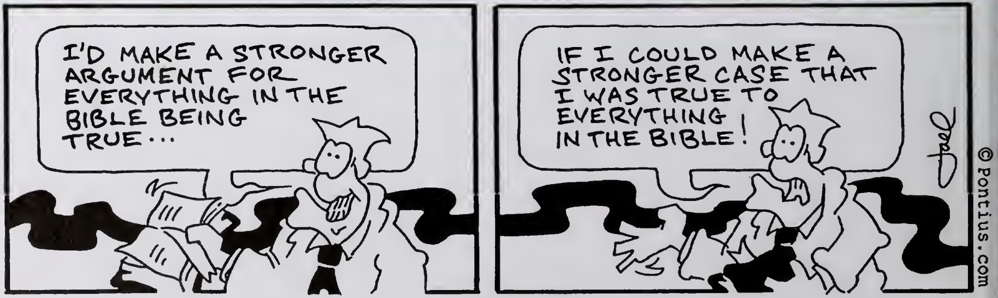
Why fast? According to former U.S. Ambassador Tony Hall, head of the Alliance to End Hunger and co-convener of the fasting effort known as Hunger Fast (www.hungerfast.org), "What we're doing is humbling ourselves before God and saying, I can't do this anymore and I need your help and I'm not going to let go until you do something."

Bittman points out that people are fasting for varying lengths of time and that, "hungry as I may get, we know I'll eat well soon, ... but many poor people don't have that option."

While many religious leaders point to Isaiah 58, in which God says that if we were more generous while we fasted he'd treat us better, Bittman writes that this is "about ironies and outrages. In 2010, corporate profits grew at their fastest rate since 1950, and we set records in the number of Americans on food stamps. The richest 400 Americans have more wealth than half of all American households combined, the effective tax rate on the nation's richest people has fallen by about half in the last 20 years, and General Electric paid zero dollars in U.S. taxes on profits of more than $14 billion. Meanwhile, roughly 45 million Americans spend a third of their post-tax income on food—and still run out monthly—and one in four kids goes to bed hungry at least some of the time."—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I'D MAKE A STRONGER ARGUMENT FOR EVERYTHING IN THE BIBLE BEING TRUE...
IF I COULD MAKE A STRONGER CASE THAT I WAS TRUE TO EVERYTHING IN THE BIBLE!
Joel
© Pontius.com

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “Doing something about climate change is making the love of Jesus tangible to hurting people.”
>
> —*Katherine Hayhoe, a climate scientist and geoscience professor at Texas Tech University, in* Sojourners

Politicians decline civility pledge

The Civility Project, an initiative intended to promote politeness among politicians, has folded after only three members of Congress agreed to sign the project's Civility Pledge. Signers of the pledge, created by Christian publicist Mark DeMoss and sent to every member of Congress and sitting governor in 2007, promise to have civil discourse, be respectful of others and stand against incivility.—*Christianity Today*

Poverty and public schools

According to *Dissent* (Winter), recent studies have shown that the problem with U.S. schools failing and falling behind standards attained by other countries has to do with poverty. American students rank first in reading and science and third in math when the sample is from schools where the poverty rate is less than 10 percent. Even in schools where poverty levels are between 10 and 25 percent, students still rank first in reading and science. The problem is that in 20 percent of U.S. schools, the poverty rates exceed 75 percent.—*Christian Century*

Young adults who regularly attend religious activities are 50 percent more likely to become obese when they reach middle age than their nonreligious peers, a new study shows.
—*Religious News Service*

Women dominate the information age

In her essay “The End of Men” in *The Atlantic*, Hanna Rosin shows how women are beginning to dominate the information age. Three women earn college degrees for every two earned by men. Of the 15 job categories projected to grow most in the next decade in the United States, all but two are predominantly filled by women. Studies show that corporations that have women in senior management perform better than male-dominated competitors.—*New York Times*

The cost of war

Without the Iraq war, argue Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, the United States would not still be stuck in Afghanistan, oil prices wouldn't be as high and the current economic crisis wouldn't be as severe. They figure that the Iraq war added $10 to the cost of a barrel of oil. Before the current crisis the federal debt ballooned from $6.4 to $10 trillion, and at least a quarter of the increase is attributable to the war, excluding health-care and disability payments to disabled veterans.—*Christian Century*

Corporations and legislation

- Percentage of voters who think the current regulations controlling the influence of large corporations on legislation are working well: **5**
- Percentage of voters who support the passage of a Constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United case: **79**

—*Yes! Magazine*

9

The number of nations, including Australia, where current trends suggest religion may soon be “extinct,” according to a new study.—*Time*

Cell phones and brain tumors

- Distance in inches you must keep an iPhone from your body to ensure the amount of radio frequency energy is below FCC exposure guidelines: **5/8 inch**
- Percentage increase in the likelihood of a brain tumor on the side of the head preferred for cell phone use in people who have used cell phones for at least 10 years: **200 percent**
- Percentage of cell phone users ages 18 to 29 who have used their phone to look up health or medical information: **29 percent**

—*Yes! Magazine*

10 myths about global warming

1. “It's the sun.”
2. “The climate's changed before.”
3. “There is no scientific consensus on climate change.”
4. “Global warming has stopped, and a cooling is beginning.”
5. “Climate models are unreliable.”
6. “The surface temperature record is unreliable and affected by artificial heat sources.”
7. “For the years 1998 to 2005, the Earth's temperature hasn't increased.”
8. “An ice age was predicted in the 1970s.”
9. “Antarctica is gaining ice.”
10. “A rise in carbon dioxide doesn't precede a rise in temperatures but lags behind it.”

—John Cook in *Sojourners*

Mother mourn

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

We sat down at the table, which smelled of chicken pot pie and sported a Santa with a tub of butter. Sarah (a pseudonym) stared across the table at us, her former foster-to-adopt parents. We had come to her new adoptive home for Sunday lunch a week before Christmas. It was the first time we had been invited for a meal since she had left us a year and a half earlier.

Her stare, filled with betrayal, burned into Al and me, her "parents" who had "abandoned" her the year before in November. That's when the courts ruled she should leave us to be adopted by her maternal grandparents. That was after she came to us at 5 months of age and was in our continuous care for 2½ years.

The painful lessons of being a foster-to-adopt parent

Her deep brown eyes sliced through my heart, then bored into Al. Her pained befuddlement reduced us to a pool of vulnerability and powerlessness. Her rock-like stare seemed to say, What are you doing here? Why did you wait so long to come? Why did you send me here in the first place?

Under her steely stare, I bowed my head in shame to gaze at mangled peas, potatoes and carrots, lost in the gray-yellow gravy on my plate. I could no longer kiss her boo-boos or comfort her in the middle of a stormy night. In despondency deeper than any I had felt up to this point, I thought, I can't heal her pain, so what business do I have showing up here now? We had no response to her questions. We could not make sense of the unfolding nightmare, let alone explain it to a child, soon to turn 3.

We had been selected by child-welfare professionals to adopt Sarah after her biological parents had relinquished their rights. But the maternal grandparents appealed the unanimous decision, made by a team of professionals who believed it best for Sarah to remain with us, her longtime family by this time. But after a review of the appeal, the agency administrators reversed their agency's decision to place her with us. We appealed the reversal, and the case went to court, where the judge sided with the reversal.

These months have been the most painful yet of my grief journey as a former foster-to-adopt mother.

Immediately after we lost Sarah, we saw her the first time after a week, then every couple of weeks. That lengthened out to a month, then several months between visits. I resented my lack of control over when and how we saw her. So when her family invited us for lunch, I at first dug in my heels, though I eventually decided to go. This was not my idea of a white Christmas, of chestnuts roasting on an open fire, of a happy family bowing in prayer around a holiday table.

A friend lovingly suggested to me that they were graciously reaching out to us, and this lunch could symbolize what Christmas was all about—bringing peace to a troubled world. Part of me felt she was right, but I still resisted. I did not envision the favored version of singing angels who sang joyfully above baby Jesus, sleeping unharmed in his mother's arms. Rather, I imagined the oft-ignored passage that speaks of the sounds of Rachel weeping for her children, massacred by a jealous king. I could hear the wizened old Sarah in Genesis, skeptically laughing at a God who said he would peel open her womb, dead as a dried apple core, and make it juicy with new life.

God quieted Sarah's laughing with a divine punch line, but just what was God's plan for this Christmas lunch? God didn't shield Mary of Bethlehem from Good Friday's brokenness, and I wouldn't be exempt either from the hard knocks of a Holy Week that got bad before it got better.

In the end, the three-hour visit didn't turn as dark as I had imagined. She played horsey with Al. She preened for me in the new clothes we brought. She pasted stickers into her new coloring book that lay in a tangle of green and red tissue. She bounced between her grandparents and us like a lost ball that wasn't sure where it was safe to land. And we adults tried to absorb Sarah's pain as we visited cordially though coolly. We privately waited for a good moment to end the visit that had many loose ends likely never to be fully resolved or tied together with a neat bow. But there were moments when I realized that the gift of hospitality had been extended, even though I did not like the package of pain it unwrapped for me.

Several months have passed since that Christmas lunch. Lent and Easter have come and gone, and Mother's Day is almost here. These months have been the most painful yet of my grief journey as a former foster-to-adopt mother. They have marked the year-and-a-half point of my loss. It's when the gift of shock has stopped buffeting my heart against the collision and has left me to nurse the mess. As I survey the chaos I am striving to order again, I reflect on Rachel, Sarah and Mary, biblical heroines for whom mothering had its pains. Their stories have guided me into some new hope and healing in my mourning.

We will always feel the hole she left in our hearts when she left, no matter how much time and healing happen.

Rachel's weeping and exiles returned

In Matthew 2:13-18, we transition from serenity and joy to exile and fear. A jealous Herod ordered the massacre of all the little boys in Bethlehem as he strove to kill the baby Jesus, an eventual threat to his kingdom. The unfolding drama echoed what the prophet had penned in Jeremiah 31, when he said that "a voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation." He referred to Rachel, the wife of patriarch Jacob, who was weeping for her children taken into exile at the time of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom. Despite the doom, the prophet attempts to console the inconsolable by proclaiming that sorrow will have its reward. In verse 17, Jeremiah writes, "There is hope for your future. … Your sons shall return to their borders."

I struggle with Jeremiah's call to find hope in despair because it wasn't until many descendants later that the hope was realized. Rachel experienced the losses that wouldn't bring gain until centuries later. Similarly, a fork in the road was taken that brought losses in our lifetime. Sarah will never be a Robinson, and she will struggle to heal from the breaking of strong bonds and attachments that formed over a period that represented most of her young life. We will always feel the hole she left in our hearts when she left, no matter how much time and healing happen.

On the other hand, Al and I discuss the likelihood of an older Sarah returning to us, asking us to help replace the missing pieces of her life. We know that in our hearts she will always be part of our forever family. And we will always want to help fill in the empty spots with our ongoing love and nurturing in the appropriate times and places.

In the end, the Israelites' exile was God's way of shaping a new future for new generations. Our attempts to view our situation in this way include ongoing advocacy work through my book *Forever Family* (see box). It chronicles our journey as foster-to-adopt parents and includes suggestions for making changes in the child-welfare system.

In the past couple of months, I have also talked with legislators at the Kansas State House. New leadership there with Social Rehabilitation Services is working hard to ensure that future generations of foster children and foster and biological families are not wounded by some of the same pains our two families—and countless others—have endured. I have new hope our future in child welfare need not look like its past.

Sarah's laughing and a divine joke reversed

Sarah is the mother of the human family that led up to the exile experienced by Rachel. In Genesis 21, we read how the childless Sarah laughed at God upon the announcement that she would bear a child in her old age.

Biblical scholars tell us that Isaac, their first child, conceived at this old age, means "may God laugh in delight and smile upon." This signifies a reversal of the earlier skepticism of Sarah as well as a healing of the shame she felt being childless in a culture that saw her worth as equal to the children she bore. At midlife, I felt I would "bear" a child in my older age through the adoption of Sarah. Al and I could not conceive. But through foster baby

Sarah, we would finally take our place as parents who could take joy in nurturing a child and gain a new level of acceptability within our community.

In the midst of the reversal of our adoption plans, I have at times felt that God delivered a divine joke with a punch line I would never understand. I have battled with feeling that the universe is laughing at my audacity to hope for being a mother in my 50s.

God gave Abraham and Sarah descendents as numerous as the stars. But the story unfolded as God planned, not as they had planned. As much as being out of control has brought me feelings of shame, I strive to remember that God smiles upon our dreams of having a family and is not laughing at us. The same God who created stars in the vast heavens is the same God who created me, created Al, created Sarah, created her biological parents and grandparents, created families to love and cherish children. In our small way, though the timing seems skewed from this side of heaven, we did our part.

On my bad days, I cannot see stars through the clouds of my grief. On my good days, I can allow my faith to be stretched like a clear Kansas night sky that unveils constellations that have order and purpose. I can trust that additional chapters of the story are still unfolding within God's ever-present and perfect timing. This God is a God of reversals, surprises, holy humor that smiles upon those who feel ashamed and brings them laughter.

Mary's breaking and wholeness regained

As difficult as it was for Rachel to feel the sorrow of exile and Sarah to feel the shame of childlessness, still harder it was for Mary to feel broken over her son's brokenness. In Luke 2, Simeon prophesies that Jesus, would be the cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel and that a sword would pierce Mary's heart. We are told little about Mary, but we know that her suffering was intertwined with that of her son's. Similarly, our greatest suffering was not our own but the suffering we watched Sarah endure.

The first week after she left our home, we were granted an hour visit with her. We took her to a burger joint. After taking her home, her grandmother told her to "tell Al and Laurie goodbye" Her face clouded in confusion and pain as she turned to me in a wave of sinking betrayal and cried, "I thought you were my mommy."

We turned to go. Sarah's wails could be heard outside as we got in the car. My wails also filled the black Ford Escort the entire trip home. I remained inconsolable for days. It was not my abandonment by a dysfunctional system that kept me awash in tears. It was her sense of abandonment and how it would likely haunt her for years to come. My tears were not shed for the hole in my heart that kept me peeking into her empty room, hoping to find her playing. It was the black hole of disorientation I imagined she felt by needing to adjust to being a stranger in a strange home.

> I pray to be consoled with the same hope that was Mary's—God created her child to fulfill a purpose and a mission.

As Mother's Day approaches, I pray to be consoled with the same hope that was Mary's—God created her child to fulfill a purpose and a mission. And Mary's purpose was to nurture Jesus for three decades as he fulfilled his destiny. My part in directly mothering Sarah lasted less than three years. Like Mary, I was not given the gift of a set amount of time. Rather, I was given the gift of a child for whom God's timing and purposes will always transcend my own.

Laurie Oswald Robinson is a free-lance writer and the author of Forever Family. *The book is available for order online at www.talesofthetimes.com, phone at 316-284-0223 or e-mail at mrslory@sbcglobal.net. Cost is $12.95 plus $3.50 handling for the first book. For two or more books, handling is $6.*

Forever Family (Tales of the Times, 2010) is Laurie Oswald Robinson's heartrending memoir of her and husband Al Robinson's experience as foster-to-adopt parents of 5-month-old Sarah (not her real name). She describes in detail their growing relationship as a family and the painful struggle of the adoption process. Oswald Robinson is unsparing in confessing her own mistakes, which come out of her desperate desire to be Sarah's mother. She structures her account as a spiritual journey organized around Psalm 139 and draws lessons from her experience. "There could be no win-win," she writes. "Someone would get Sarah; someone would not. She was given to our world by her Creator as a gift, not a possession." Oswald Robinson concludes her personal story with a section of four essays from a more academic perspective that provide some background for the concepts introduced in the book. While the book provides lessons we all need to learn about the pain of loving and giving up control, it will be especially useful to those considering becoming foster-to-adopt parents.
—*Gordon Houser*

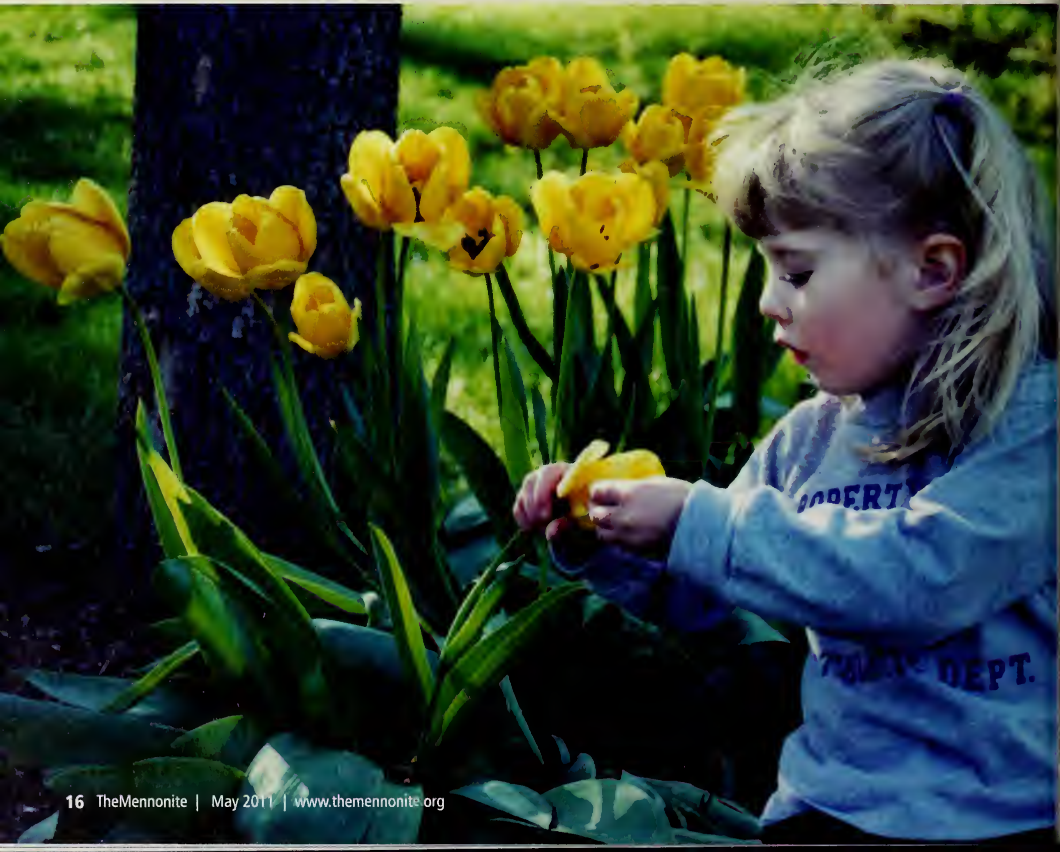
FOREVER
family

The author's mother let her children experience creation in all its abundance.

Honoring mother

by Ruth Yellowhawk

My mother loved the earth. Nothing could please her more than to see nature's abundance displayed prominently in our home and nurturing our bellies.



If we brought home a rock, a stick, a handful of dandelions or a crumpled stalk of Queen Anne's Lace, my mother would stop whatever she was doing (and believe me she was doing a lot with 10 children to look after) and say, "Oh my, this is so beautiful." She made us feel special for noticing the rich creation before us. Then she would gather a cherished bowl or a vase or a plate and make a centerpiece for our table.

Mom saw abundance. It was a gift. She courted it. And more importantly she invited us to court it, too. But not in the way I have all too often mistakenly encouraged my son to take notice, saying, "Aren't those flowers gorgeous?" She tied us to the land by letting us roam for hours and hours.

She let us get hurt, stung, bruised and battered by the natural world. We left each experience wanting more. We swam in creeks until we knew every turn, each deep pool, turtle, water spider and snake. When it rained, we rolled in wet mud and slid in the gullies that filled with rainwater. We washed our hair under the roof gutters. And we counted time by the four o'clocks she planted.

We explored the complexities and corridors of newly developed underground water drainage pipes being installed in our neighborhood as if they were our own cities. We sat for hours in haylofts and swung from the pulleys on the rafters. We jumped off our barn and climbed on our house's steep roof. We ran under our horse and hid between our neighbor's milking cows. We daydreamed in these places. We lived fully and came home hungry.

These days I long to see more children running barefoot, dirty and carefree. But at every turn, it feels as though so many of the constraints put into place for child welfare serve only to create a pattern of mothering that shouts, "No."

This shortsighted approach points out the dangers of each plant, cliff and route rather than encouraging wonder. A simple walk can turn into a stressful session of, "Hurry up," "Stay on the path" and, "Don't touch that." Such legalistic pressures create a disconnect from the bounty of Mother Earth and dishonor our intuitive mothering skills. They say to children, "Beware" rather than, "Be awed."

For me, honoring my mother means reconnecting with the earth, this grand and glorious mother who sustains us as special guests at her immaculate table. I long to feel it again—all of it—the worms beneath my bare feet, the clover ripe with nectar for honey, the cool waters of the creek under the shade of the maple tree, the rocks that were always in my pocket.

And while it would be easy to provide the legalistic list, the commandments of honoring our earth—recycle, reduce, reuse, grow your own, go organic, quit wanting so much stuff—the truth is, I want to say, "Want more."

These days I long to see more children running barefoot, dirty and carefree.

Want more vistas that aren't marred by gray haze, styrofoam or noise pollution. Want more to eat that is not flecked with ingredients that are man-made or packaged beyond recognition. Want your grandchildren and theirs to remember the feel of dirt in their hands, in their toes and definitely in their mouths. Want to feel free to wander this earth just to see what might be found quivering with life underneath the rock, bursting with color and light within the bud of the flower and gleaming beneath the water's surface.

And for our mothers, let us want the same—to always seek the depths within her heart without fear of, "No." Take your mother for a walk outside or bring what is outside in to her. Either way, there is honor for her there.

Ruth Yellowhawk before her death on Aug. 7, 2010, at age 50 served as co-director of Indigenous Issues Forums, a group of Native facilitators dedicated to community-building practices working in collaboration with others, including Mennonite Central Committee. This article is reprinted from Timbrel *(May/June 2010).*

A letter to my daughter

by Jenn Esbenshade

Being a Christian means something more than just a label.

I took you to the petting zoo today. Like usual, you dressed yourself in your mismatched clothes. You put your elastic headband around the top of your head, making you look more like a hippie child than the princess with a crown you think you are making. You were set to go out.

I have become so accustomed to your uniqueness that I barely even notice. But today was different. As we looked at the animals, I noticed the other little girls there. They had nicely matched clothes, neatly pressed and fitting. Their hair was combed into smooth ponytails or pretty braids. And then there stood you. I saw people look. I waited for the comments. So often I hear things like, "You are so brave to let her go out like that" or, "What a free spirit!"

But today, no comments came. You were so enthralled in the animals and so caught up in life that you wouldn't have known anyway. You were oblivious to it all.

My hope and prayer is that you stay that way. The world will try to change you. The world will tell you you have to dress a certain way. It will tell you you have to act a certain way and tell you what it means to be a young woman in this society. It will try to impose itself on you and change you into an image of those around you.

The apostle Paul knew of this. He knew of the seduction of the world and its insidious desire for conformity. He wrote in Romans 12:2: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

So, my dear daughter, don't conform. Don't be tempted to try to fit in. Jesus certainly didn't. He was publicly admonished and chastised by religious leaders. The people of his hometown thought he was crazy and tried to throw him off a cliff. He was scorned and rejected. Yet there was something that drew people to him. Crowds gathered to hear him, and hurting people desired nothing more than just to touch him. It wasn't because Jesus was just like the others around him; it was because he was so different.

Jesus was scorned and rejected. Yet there was something that drew people to him.

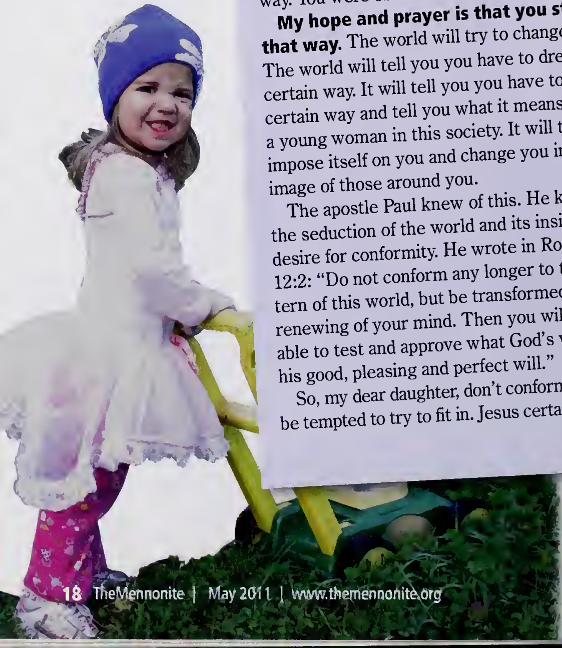
Today it is the clothes that make you stand out, but someday I hope it will be more. I hope that as you grow, there will be something different about you. I pray you will be challenged by the example set before you by Jesus and Paul and by your family, friends and church, that being a Christian means something more than just a label. I pray you will adopt a lifestyle of radical unconformity that stretches you to become the hands and feet of Christ in a world that needs more servants and less being served.

I know this is a lot for your 3-year-old self, but in the blink of an eye you will be grown. Please know that I and many others will be upholding you in prayer for this very thing—that you will know God's good, pleasing and perfect will in your life and that it causes you to blossom into a new creation in Christ.

In the meantime, your stripes and your flowers together are just fine by me.

Jenn Esbenshade is a member of New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Myla, the author's daughter, with her toy mower. Photo provided



Wise men and subversive women

A reflection on Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Matthew 2:1-12

by David A. Stevens

In Matthew's Gospel, the visit of the Wise men begins like a romantic quest. Astrological speculators wonder at the heavens. Then they embark on a quixotic search for a holy grail. Foreign intellectuals follow a star to the home of a deliverer-to-be. They bear gifts fit for a king, not a toddler. And we smile. Yet the romantic quest is tinged with threat and finally doused with brutality, because the wise men are not the only ones on a quest; so is a mad man.

The first two chapters of Exodus lack any such romanticism. We are immediately plunged into a world of systematic dehumanization on a national scale: A savage dictator turns the wheels of state policy to brutalize slaves. But even under harsh labor the slaves multiply. So the king becomes ever more desperate for control and proposes even more extreme measures: Genocide, ethnic cleansing, a "final solution" to the problem of the Hebrews.

The victims experience terrible suffering. Yet, as often happens under extreme conditions, the victims rise to a miraculous newfound strength: Desperation births an indomitable will to live and the creativity that turns survival into a mission.

It would be suicidal for slaves to defy Pharaoh openly. Younger siblings know that you don't assault your older brothers and sisters openly; you learn to be sneaky. Such is the case of the Hebrews: Initially, resistance takes subversive forms: cunning midwives, secretive mothers, stealthy sisters and brazen princesses. These people and their defiant acts build on one another into a sacred conspiracy, an underground church. Subversive women conspire to become the deliverers of the deliverer. It is mothering that starts the engine of liberation. It is subversive women who crystallize the life-dealing presence of God. Direct confrontations with Pharaoh will come, like the plagues and horses and riders sinking into the depths like a stone. But it is mothering that sends the tremor along the fault line; mothering is the branch scratching the roof that awakens the world to the gathering storm. These subversive acts kindle God's memory and the burning bush.

There are six subversive women in our text: (1) Shiphrah and (2) Puah, the Hebrew midwives; (3) Moses' mother; (4) Moses' sister; (5) Pharaoh's daughter and (6) the princess' servant woman, who is barely mentioned. All these make a contribution to preserving the life of Moses, God's chosen liberator.

> It is mothering that starts the engine of liberation. It is subversive women who crystallize the life-dealing presence of God.

These are not the only subversive women in the Bible. In 2 Kings 5 is the story of an Israelite girl, maybe the age of a seventh or eighth grader. She is abducted by foreign soldiers and comes to be a slave in the house of a Syrian general named Naaman. What a horrible ordeal, to be captured in a raid, displaced from family and friends! Yet she directs General Naaman to the prophet Elisha, who heals him from his illness. Naaman's slave girl is a peacemaker, even under tragic circumstances.

And there are many more stories of subversive women in the Bible that are not told. We'd love to know the story of She'erah, barely mentioned in 1 Chronicles 7. She breaks the mold of women's occupations by building cities. Was she the architect, the financier, the general contractor or all of the above? What was her personality like?

We'd love to know more about Joash's nurse in 2 Kings 11. Queen Athaliah had seized power in

It is the midwives who first stir the pot of the exodus, who lead off this crescendo of subversiveness. We learn from their example.

Judah. She was a brutal dictator. She set about to kill all rivals to the throne. The legitimate king, Joash, was just a boy. But when Athaliah began her purge, Joash's nurse hid him in a storage room in the Temple for six years. How did she keep a kid in a closet occupied for six years?

Or how about the Transjordanian women pioneers in Numbers 32? Moses makes the men from the 2½ tribes that settle east of the Jordan River help the other tribes get settled west of Jordan. So the women from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh are on their own. They had to do the farming, shepherding, childrearing and defense. And they must have succeeded.

We do know the story of these subversive women at the time of Israel's changed conditions in Egypt and Moses' beginning. And the story is packed with irony. The Hebrews, who were the state-sponsored guests of a former Pharaoh, have become a national enemy. The current Pharaoh's repeated efforts to crush the Hebrews are not only thwarted; the greater the oppression, the more the Hebrews thrive. The powerful head of government is outsmarted by women who deliver babies. Moses, the savior of the Hebrews, receives an Egyptian name and grows up in the Egyptian palace. Moses' mother actually complies with Pharaoh's decree; she puts the baby in the river but in a waterproof container. Moses' sister stations herself to watch what happens. Then she appears conversing with the Princess of Egypt, as if that's natural. The sister offers to arrange a nurse for the baby who turns out to be none other than Moses' mother. So Moses' mother not only saves her baby but winds up taking care of him, with the Egyptian princess paying her to do it. And the biggest irony of all—Pharaoh, who twice tries to kill off all the Hebrew boys, winds up having a Hebrew boy as an adopted grandson (Exodus 2:10). As Dunbar says in *Dances with Wolves*, "The strangeness of this life cannot be measured."

It is the midwives who first stir the pot of the exodus, who lead off this crescendo of subversiveness. We learn from their example.

Iraqi children in the community of Mahkmur receiving school kits. Photo by Melissa Engle/MCC

Shiphrah and Puah beg the question, What are the limits to the cooperation of God's people with the governments under which we live? How much can Jesus' followers participate in the wider culture, and where must they say no? What are the lines Christians cannot cross? At what point do we act as the midwives and "obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:39)?

This question can remain theoretical or at the periphery of our experience for long periods of time, then suddenly comes to center stage. My family and I were serving in Trinidad on Sept. 11, 2001. The word came from the U.S. Embassy for all Americans to keep a low profile; that's a challenge when you're among the few white-skinned people in the country. The embassy said Americans should not go out in public unless absolutely necessary. We met with the church leaders. We prayed and discerned. We decided we would obey the embassy where we could. But we would not curtail the work of ministry out of fear or simply because the government said so. Why? Because we are under the command of a higher authority.

This is what the Anabaptist women decided as well. The Anabaptist movement, from which Mennonites come, began during oppressive times. In 1527, the Anabaptist movement was barely two years old but spreading rapidly. This new spin on the Christian faith was considered heretical and dangerous by Catholics and Protestants alike. Anabaptism was outlawed, and Anabaptists were hunted down and executed. But the more the Pharaohs and Herods of that day tried to stamp them out, the more they thrived.

In the German city of Augsburg, Anabaptist

Because Moses survives, Israel is delivered, and Jesus is born, and we receive good news.

women did not usually preach in public or baptize. Yet they were subversive leaders, crucial to life of the underground church. Scholastica Stierpaur held secret Anabaptist meetings and baptisms in her home. She also hid several Anabaptist pastors. Katharina Wiedenmann used her husband's shoe business as a cover for secret Bible studies and alms distribution. Barbara Schleiffer's grocery store was a perfect disguise for hiding Anabaptist refugees and passing on information. Several "sewing circles" in Augsburg were really evangelism circles. Perhaps the women were so active because they could move about less conspicuously than the men. But nothing detracts from the courage of these subversive women of Christ who spread the gospel beneath the radar of the authorities. As a result, Anabaptism did not merely survive but grew. Without their holy subversion, you and I would not be here today (from *Anabaptist History and Theology* by C. Arnold Snyder).

Shiphrah and Puah's great grandchildren are still with us: courageous and creative people who find ways to survive and thrive today in the face of oppression.

Sadiqa Basiri Saleem is a 28-year-old Afghan woman. She was the victim of a violent assault and rape. And she has a passion for the education of girls. She has started six schools for girls in eastern Afghanistan out of almost nothing, even though the Taliban forbids formal education for girls. Sadiqa's passion is dangerous—for the teachers, the students and Sadiqa herself, who regularly receives threats on her life. Few learning materials are available. Sometimes only the bombed-out shell of a building is available to meet in. Yet despite all the difficulties, some of the girls gladly walk two hours each way to attend classes in mathematics, reading, writing and geography.

In Uganda, there has been a 21-year civil war. Militia groups raid villages at night. They kidnap the children, brainwash them and make them soldiers and sex slaves. But some courageous and subversive women have organized hidden "motels," secret locations where children are guarded and sleep in safety. The children are escorted from their villages at dusk and walk miles to these hidden places. For some of these children this has been a way of life for a decade. Imagine if your child could not sleep safely in your house and every night had to walk miles to a secret place from the time he or she was a second grader until high school graduation.

These subversive women—and men—who bring hope in such desperate situations are not superstars. You just have to reach a point where you say: "Enough is enough. I won't stand for it anymore. Things have to change, and I'm going to do something." Like Jody Williams from the little town of Putney, Vt., who said, "Enough is enough. There are land mines all over the world. Some of them have been in the ground for more than 60 years, and they're still killing people. I won't stand for it anymore," and she did something about it. For her efforts she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

Do Shiphrah and Puah have any great-grandchildren here today? Anybody motivated enough to organize a GuluWalk like two ordinary students did in Canada and raised $75,000 for commuter children in Uganda? Anybody motivated enough to help an Afghan girl get a pencil and a notebook because she would be thrilled to get them? You can make a difference in somebody's life.

It is all connected. A ribbon runs through it. Because Moses survives, Israel is delivered, and Jesus is born, and we receive good news. All this comes from the God who challenges the Herods and the Pharaohs, challenges them through wise men and subversive women.

Our Lord knows what it's like to have your life threatened by people with power. Jesus Christ continues his mission of deliverance, continues it through people who are fed up and hopeful and ready to do something. Are you ready to join him?

David A. Stevens is pastor at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

The revolutionary story in Matthew 1:1-17

Subversive mothers in the genealogy of Jesus

by Bert Newton

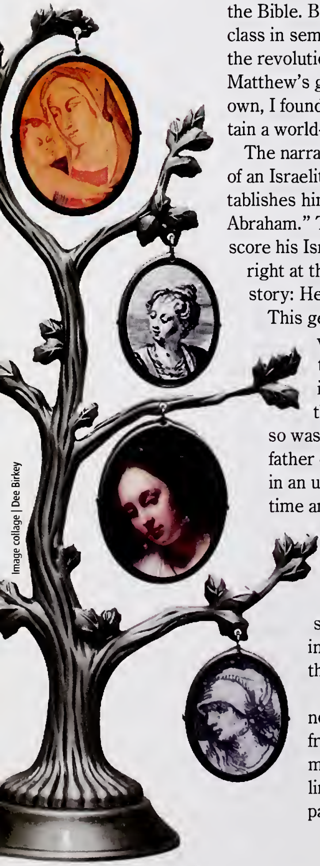


Image collage | Dee Birkey

Like many Bible readers, I used to skip the genealogies because I thought they were boring and insignificant to the message of the Bible. But then one day in my New Testament class in seminary, the professor tipped us off to the revolutionary message contained in Matthew's genealogy. Upon further study on my own, I found that this genealogy does, in fact, contain a world-shattering, subversive story.

The narrative begins by giving Jesus the titles of an Israelite king: Messiah, Son of David. It establishes him as a true son of Israel, a "son of Abraham." The genealogy then goes on to underscore his Israelite heritage further, placing him right at the center of the trajectory of Israel's story: He descends from Israel's greatest king. This genealogy, however, tells a particular version of the Israelite story. The particulars of this story proceed from the interruptions in the normal pattern of the genealogy, which states, "so-and-so was the father of so-and-so, who was the father of so-and-so." This pattern progresses in an uninterrupted line of fathers. Every time another element interrupts the genealogy, the reader should take special notice; at these points, Matthew is trying to tell us something important, something he feels significantly shapes the history of Israel, especially in terms of the direction Jesus takes that history.

The five major interruptions in the normal pattern of the genealogy result from the mention of women. The normal pattern traces an exclusively male lineage, as was the custom in the highly patriarchal society of the first-century Mediterranean world. The in-breaking of five women itself signals something fundamentally different in this version of Israel's history. Matthew tells the story not merely by highlighting the powerful male figures but by giving special notice to minor female figures, the exceptions to the rule. A contemporary equivalent might be a review of American history that lists all the presidents from George Washington to Barack Obama with the insertion at various places of women such as Harriet Tubman, Mother Jones and Monica Lewinsky. These are women who represent exceptions to the rule, who challenged the rules, exposed the shortcomings of the rulers or both.

These are women who represent exceptions to the rule, who challenged the rules, exposed the shortcomings of the rulers or both.

In Matthew's genealogy, Tamar leads the invasion of women into the patriarchal narrative. By including her, Matthew recalls for the reader a story in which Tamar scandalously impersonates a prostitute in order to bring about justice for herself and in the process exposes the sin of her father-in-law, Judah. We are not only reminded of a story in which a woman cleverly asserts herself but also of Judah's sin. Judah was the father of the tribe of Judah, the one from whom Jews/Judeans draw their name. Matthew's reference to a story that reveals Judah's sin says something important about Matthew's reading of Israelite history.

Matthew locates the righteousness of Israel not in the father of the tribe but in a woman who impersonates a prostitute; she is the one who brings about justice.

Soon after Tamar, Rahab charges into the story line. Tamar impersonated a prostitute, but Rahab actually was a prostitute, as well as a Gentile. She represents the outcasts of society. Matthew here prepares the reader for the kind of people Jesus will locate himself among, sinners and outcasts, the people from whom the kingdom of God will emerge.

Right on Rahab's heels comes Ruth, another Gentile and possibly another seducer. She came from Moab, an enemy of Israel. Her inclusion represents the enemy Jesus calls his followers to love. She also represents the widow, the alien and the poor whom the laws of Torah command society to provide for because of their vulnerability. Ruth's story itself tells of a woman who through her assertiveness caused these laws to work.

Next in the succession of women is one who is unnamed, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. She is the one through whom David fathered Solomon. In referring to Bathsheeba, not by name but by telling us that she was Uriah's wife, Matthew highlights the sin of King David. Matthew reminds the reader that Bathsheeba was someone else's wife, that David had Uriah killed because of his lust for her. Her inclusion in the genealogy strikes a major blow at what must have been the dominant version of Israel's story, one that longed for the glory days of the empire of David and Solomon. Matthew began the narrative by telling us that Jesus is a "Son of David," but now he reminds us that David was an adulterer, a liar and a murderer. The central patriarch of the narrative has been cut down. (The reader should also note that the Davidic line of kings failed, ending in the "deportation to Babylon," an event Matthew clearly highlights.)

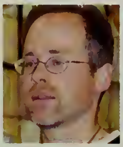
Culminating the succession of women is one who, in another Gospel, sings that God brings down the powerful from their thrones. Mary, a young peasant woman who gets pregnant before her wedding, gives birth to the Messiah. Mary not only interrupts the normal pattern of the genealogy, she breaks it. Up until now, even with the previous interruptions, the normal pattern of "so-and-so was the father of so-and-so" maintained. This time, however, Matthew writes "Mary, from whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah." Matthew does not say that Joseph is the father of Jesus. The male line is broken in the final sequence to give birth to a new king who is at once Davidic and non-Davidic.

Five women interrupt and finally break the patriarchal pattern of the Israelite lineage of Jesus. They remind us of the sins of the fathers; they remind us of the laws of Torah that command society to provide for the marginalized and the poor of the community; they remind us of assertive women who made those laws work; they remind us that salvation comes from the marginalized and the powerless who become our heroes; they remind us that there is no such thing as a pure ethnicity, that there is ultimately no strict "us" and "them," that we are our enemies and they are us, one humanity.

Jesus inaugurates the Jubilee generation, an era in which everything will be reconstituted, redistributed and turned upside down.

Jesus is born not from the human, Davidic line but through the Holy Spirit from a spiritual lineage of women: seducers, prostitutes, victims, heroes, Gentiles, poor and outcast. That's where our salvation comes from. That's where, for Matthew, the kingdom of God emerges. The kingdom of God emerges from Israel through its marginalized and poor.

Matthew tells us that from Abraham to Jesus are three sets of 14 generations, or six sets of seven generations. The implication is that Jesus begins the last seven, the final epoch. He begins the seventh set of seven generations, an allusion to the Jubilee year, the seventh Sabbath year. Jesus inaugurates the Jubilee generation, an era in which everything will be reconstituted, redistributed and turned upside down. Matthew prepares us for this radical remaking of the world by giving us a genealogy in which five women, one for each of the books of Torah, radically transform the Israelite story.



Bert Newton is a member of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church.

Choosing to preach Christ

by Jonathan Emerson-Pierce

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.—1 Corinthians 2:2-4

On occasion, we preachers sense a "holy nudge." The Holy Spirit gives a gentle reminder to proclaim that the Creator was once crucified on a Roman cross. This is the kind of claim that can draw many seasoned objections. In preparation, we may choose to cite various experts from philosophy and the sciences. No "plausible words of wisdom" exist for a preacher to take listeners from popular notions of God to God having once been hung on a Roman cross. For some, the Creator may be conceived of as far too transcendent and "other" to be incarnated. For others, God may be equated with nature or more like a Zeus who once presided over Mt. Olympus. Theological diversity was just as common in the first century as it is today.

Paul's perspective is especially telling: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Clearly, Paul implies that comprehension of the Cross is "spiritually discerned" (2:14), a kind of revelation, much as Jesus himself taught concerning the kingdom (Matthew 13:11). Thus, however excellent the rhetoric may be, non-Christians largely remain unpersuaded of either Christ or his kingdom apart from the Spirit's power (1 Corinthians 2:5).

Good rhetoric has its place. Careful and logical

The gospel is unconvincing apart from the Spirit's power.

appeal can only strengthen a sermon's effectiveness. And Paul would have agreed, if his writings are any testimony (see also his speeches in Acts 17:16-31; 22:1-16). Therefore, Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:16 seems to have been that preaching must be Christ centered and Spirit empowered if it is to be effective.

Preaching must be Christ centered and Spirit empowered if it is to be effective.

Golgotha is dreadfully real: as real as suffering, as real as hard work and sacrifice, as real as failure, as real as persecution.—V.A. Kraft

Still, the challenge to preach Christ effectively is considerable. In the church's earliest centuries, the greatest challenge was to explain how the Incarnation was possible. The limitations of traditional thought-forms (substance metaphysics) made this difficult. However, the influence of quantum physics has changed the modern landscape. The new physics demonstrate how such is likely, given that everything in the universe appears interconnected. Even understanding how God sustains the universe (Colossians 1:17) has become possible.

Nonetheless, today there are other challenges to preaching Christ. Lately, many authors have written about the similarities between Christian teachings and those of more ancient religions. Generally, these publications are anti-Christian. Their intent is to show how Christian teaching has merely plagiarized others. This much is clear and needs explaining: In both East and West, a number of religions had some form of the Divine Child, some form of Savior-God and some form of the Cross within their belief systems.

But the strength of this argument is not what it seems. Early Christians well knew and were not troubled by the religious similarities, and the same should be true of us. For even Scripture teaches that God has not left the world without witness (Romans 1:19). Indeed, if one traces theological development in Scripture, it is clear that revelation never took place in a vacuum. For Paul and other early Christians, Christ's story was different because, unlike the stories of pagan Saviour-Gods, it was genuinely real.

I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere or produce fruit if there were neither light nor heat as to convert men and women if I did not believe there was a Holy Spirit.—Henry Ward Beecher

Even so, Paul tells us that apart from the Spirit's power the gospel remained largely unconvincing. In the case of Paul, when he encountered many of the earliest Christians he remained unmoved (Acts 8:1; 9:1-2). As far as we know, he never seems to have put much confidence in the testimony of anyone, including Peter or John (Galatians 2:6). Rather, like others we read about in the New Testament, Paul's experience led him to understand faith as primarily a gift (Ephesians 2:8-10), if not a personal revelation of Christ himself (Acts 9:3-18; Gal.1:11-12; see also John 20).

For Paul and other early Christians, Christ's story was different because, unlike the stories of pagan Saviour-Gods, it was genuinely real.

Over the years, I have enjoyed the privilege of leading non-Christians to faith. Along the way, I have shared my perceptions about God as understood through philosophy and science. Sometimes, it has proven helpful. Yet I never witnessed a single lasting conversion that was not decisively brought about by the convicting and convincing work of the Spirit (John 16:8).

Perhaps that's because Jesus Christ is God's decisive revelation for the world. Education and rhetoric have their place. But apart from Christ-centered preaching, there is not the life-giving message of God's love. And apart from the Spirit, the message of Christ is without impact. Not surprisingly, then, Christ said that the primary reason the Spirit was given was in support of those who would proclaim him (Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:20-23; Acts 1:8, 2:1-47). Thus, every preacher is called upon to choose for herself or himself.

Jonathan Emerson-Pierce is a D.Min candidate at Drew Theological School in Madison, N.J. He lives in Toronto, Ontario.

Parenting provides daily opportunities to mature as a Christian.

Parenting as spiritual discipline

by Debbi (Diener) DiGennaro

One Saturday I made doughnuts. They were drying on the newspaper—five rows of perfectly round, crisp doughnuts—when my daughter grabbed one and fed it to our dog. I left the room to count to 10, for those were my special doughnuts. While I was out, she taught Little Brother her new game, and another two doughnuts disappeared. Ten was not a large enough number to hold my exasperation. It was like someone plugged me into a TV, and all the gunky immaturity inside me was broadcast on a wide screen. I hate that.

The call of spirituality, as well as the call of parenting, is this: to transcend self-centeredness and yield to love.

I'm not sure who decides what qualifies as a "legitimate" spiritual discipline. Popes, perhaps, or ancient monks who have written eloquently on the classic disciplines such as prayer and fasting. But I contend—admittedly, without the funny monk haircut—that they have overlooked one discipline, a spiritual exercise machine par excellence: parenting.

Not that we should blame the monks. They were, after all, monks, and the good ones had no children. But as a mother of two tiny ones, who prays and meditates when the kids are napping, *if* the kids are napping, I argue that it ought to qualify as a fully accredited spiritual discipline.

The call of spirituality, as well as the call of parenting, is this: to transcend self-centeredness and yield to love.

Prayer, confession, fasting and the like are at times uncomfortable. (It's called discipline for a reason.) When I decide to fast, I expect to be miserable. And invariably, someone has a birthday party with spicy little fried things and fudge on that exact day. But I chose to suspend gratification because I know there is something worthwhile to gain by overriding my natural desires. I don't look forward to doing the fast, but I look forward to it being done. Conclude the fast with a glass of green algae drink, and I just feel plain healthy.

Unlike parenting, though, the fast is still somewhat under my control. If my blood sugar drops too low and I get dizzy, I grab a sandwich. It's that simple. I don't get carried away. But parenting is such a powerful discipline because you can't just "break the fast" upon exhaustion and grab some food. In this discipline, I push myself a lot further into transcendence—partly for the sake of my kids, but mostly because I don't have a choice.

God invites us into this transcendence gently; our kids drive us there with a front loader. Either way, we usually resist the opportunity to transcend ourselves.

Self-centeredness is so delicious. And the posture of yieldedness is just plain uncomfortable in any form—even if I'm being "yielded" to a fairy. It's like someone just suggested that a bunch of adults play Twister. Must we? I prefer my self-centered agenda over lofty ideals like transcendence every time.

God understands this. God is also much more pleasant to deal with than my children, which is why parenting is so frightfully formative. With God, or even with a human spouse, you can gasp out a plea for an extension on this learning assignment when the stretch is just too much. The baby,

Exasperation of parenting: Daughter Prisca and the author making doughnuts. Photo provided

on the other hand, responds to your plea with a cute smile, then tries again to climb into the oven.

Some days I catch myself debating which of us to lock in the utility closet, me or the toddler? Oh God, can it be me today? Can't I please spend the afternoon locked in the closet? The demands are so heavy. Our kids force us far beyond our limits, far beyond our inclinations toward transcendence.

But this is the function of the disciplines—they offer us avenues to transcend ourselves. The main issue is me and my willingness to be transformed.

Being a mother has enabled me to transcend (some of) my self-centeredness. I would not have scraped together the wherewithal to do this for my own benefit; certainly not for my husband's, and probably not even for God's. But those little weasels—and my love for them—somehow helped me find some wherewithal deep in my toes.

I am now able to set my agenda aside, without visiting my therapist, for at least three hours.

Yesterday evening, I found myself washing my daughter's muddy feet. This is a skill I learned long ago. In our (Fairview, Mich.) Mennonite church, we practiced "foot washing." I remember as a child watching my mother bend over a dish basin in the church library to wash the pantyhosed feet of her peers. After Mom finished, she would hug the other lady and then trade places.

Squatting across from my daughter with a water basin between us, I noticed my technique. I spoon a few handfuls of water over her ankles, in that precise way I saw my mom do, and gently swoosh it toward her toes. My motions were peculiar in their softness, considering that my kid had been "cooking" with red clay mud all afternoon.

I serve my kids in many ways. But to actually wash their feet always touches a deep place inside me. In the church library of my childhood, it was a holy ritual. In rituals, we do with our hands what we desire to do with our attitudes. The feet did not actually need to be washed. In fact, I am quite sure every one of those ladies scrubbed their heels with a pumice stone beforehand. And the old grandmas always cooperated so sweetly, always giving sincere appreciation at the end.

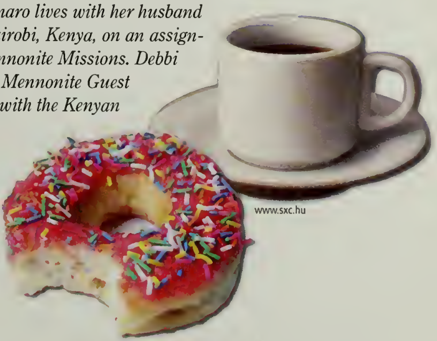
Appreciation is not my reality. I am literally washing feet that are filthy, that wiggle and squirm and jump to escape in that half second when I reach for the soap. The kids shriek and bawl if this foot washing takes more than three seconds. But shrieks and all, I enjoy it. It is acting out a ritual that affirms what I'm doing in real life, every day. It is a witness to the changes taking place at a deeper level in this mother: to transcend myself and yield to love.

If you want to be nurtured in the spiritual disciplines, read Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. Perhaps a cup of tea or a CD of ocean waves and chirping birds will enhance your learning. However, if you are interested in the trench warfare version, consider parenting. It extracts maturity—without your permission.

> Perhaps a cup of tea or a CD of ocean waves and chirping birds will enhance your spiritual discipline. But if you are interested in the trench warfare version, consider parenting.

And all this—the water basins for genuinely muddy feet, wishing to be locked in the closet, the misery of losing myself as the center of the universe—forms me in God's image. And that is, after all, the fingerprint of the spiritual disciplines.

Debbi (Diener) DiGennaro lives with her husband and two toddlers in Nairobi, Kenya, on an assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Debbi and Aram manage the Mennonite Guest House and collaborate with the Kenyan Anabaptist churches.



www.sxc.hu

All things **new**

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

by Pam Nath

> *From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*—2 Corinthians 5:16-20

As is repeated too often around the world, the situations of the majority of the people have worsened, while a tiny elite benefits.

Four years ago, I sold my house, gave up my position as a tenured college professor and moved to New Orleans, where I now live and work for Mennonite Central Committee Central States. (In order to be clear from the start that living out the commands of Jesus is something I aspire to, not something I do perfectly, I should clarify that I put the profits from the sale of my house into a CD rather than giving them to the poor.)

Much has changed about my life over these four years. How does this compare with the new creation described in Paul's words to the church at Corinth?

The Scripture text chosen as a theme for the Pittsburgh convention includes such beautiful words—a new creation, a new start, all things new, a ministry of reconciliation. What things do you want to become new, to get a clean start with?

Socialized in a white, working-class environment, I learned frugality. I continue to use old things way past the time most people replace them. Before I traded in my last car, I had to hold the driver's side window up with my left hand while driving. I am typing this reflection on a computer with several stuck keys, a missing left-click button and a missing disk drive panel.

When I finally get around to replacing my old worn-out things, the feel of "newness" of a new car, a new computer—a new whatever—is quite a treat. And these are just things. What if our relationships became new—all the brokenness from the wear and tear of the years washed away and all things full of potential and promise yet again? What if our bodies became new? What if the Earth we live on became new? What if we could start over and create a new society, free from the legacy of wrongs that we all have inherited?

In the world we live in, we cause such harm to ourselves, to one another and to the rest of creation. I work in a majority black community that has been brutalized by racism and economic oppression. With tourism a major industry, many of the jobs available in the city are low-wage service jobs. The poverty rate in the city before Hurricane Katrina was twice the national average, with a stark racial discrepancy; three times as many of the city's black residents fell below the poverty rate as white residents. The region has become increasingly vulnerable to hurricanes due to the loss of the wetlands, and the oil industry and choices to deprioritize investments in infrastructure and environmental restoration have contributed to this loss.

In recent years, poverty in this area has only intensified. Some people saw economic and political opportunities in the devastation that occurred following Hurricane Katrina, and as a result, fewer public services are now available, due to almost all sectors having become privatized. Transportation, education, health care, housing and recreation programs all cost more than they did before the storm. As is repeated too often around the world, the situations of the majority of the people have worsened, while a tiny elite benefits. Those who have the means have seized land and political power without giving thought to those whose broken hearts and shattered lives they are building upon. What causes and maintains such startling numbness to the humanity, suffering, hurt and longing of other people?

All of us are damaged by the realities of oppression in our world. As I live and work with people who have experienced so much displacement, I bear the burden of ancestors who have purged other lands in other times, many times over. In the course of these past four years, I have formed some authentic relationships with people of color as we work alongside one another in our common struggle to create a more loving world. These relationships must be lived out in a world that bears the wounds of centuries of injustice and racial violence. No amount of good intentions or personal history can inoculate my friends and me against the times when this wounded history seems to rear up and make the chasm between us seem so wide, even virtually uncrossable. We work for a new creation, but we do not live in a new creation.

We read in Romans that the creation "waits with eager longing ... [to] be set free from its bondage to decay" (Romans 8:19-20). I long for a new creation more than anything. I long for a world without racism, without poverty, without weapons, without oppressive and unjust hierarchies, without hunger and chronic unmet needs, without greed. I long for a world that operates on love and care for one another, with vibrant communities providing support and accountability, where we embrace dialogue among multiple perspectives that all enrich each other. I am an idealist. Is this an unrealistic vision? Paul writes to the Corinthians that everything old has passed away, and all things have become new.

Our world groans for change at the individual, relational and institutional levels.

Some believe the only change God is working to bring about is inside ourselves, but many things have convinced me otherwise, including Jesus' persistent and remarkable care and concern for the poor, women and other social outcasts; Bible passages about political hierarchies being reversed (see Luke 1: 52-53); as well as the stirrings of my own heart and spirit. God is changing us internally, but God does not stop there. Our world groans for change at the individual, relational and institutional levels, and I see God's Spirit sometimes whispering, other times shouting a message of reconciliation for all three.

Leaving a tenured position and moving to work in this struggling community seemed to others like a courageous leap of faith, but God was so strongly present with me during that it didn't seem like anything else was even possible. I re- ▶

member reading a reflection about a drop of water "surrendering to gravity" as it fell off a leaf, and that is how it felt to me at that time. Sometimes God's change comes in that way.

We are called to be builders of bridges from the old to the new creation.

Often, though, change is much harder to come by. For four years, my job has been focused on work for social change, and what I experience most often is how stuck we are in the old brokenness. I am a member of Critical Resistance, a group that envisions a world without jails—not a world without accountability but a world where healthy, intact communities work to prevent harm by promoting humane values and care for one another and address harm restoratively when it does occur. But what are you going to do with the rapists and murderers? People want to know, just as those who argue against nonviolence want to know what pacifist Mennonites would do about Hitler. In a world like the one we're working for, there would be fewer murderers, rapists and Hitlers to deal with, but I know we aren't there yet. How do we get there from here?

We are called to be builders of bridges from the old to the new creation. To do this, we need to liberate our imaginations and dream of what seems barely possible. We are—as the theme verses for Pittsburgh 2011 remind us—called to a ministry of reconciliation, working to reconcile this world to a God who demands that we first be reconciled to one another.

During Advent 2007, the denominational resources for the liturgical season included a theme song called "The Canticle of the Turning" by Rory Cooney. The words of the song gave me hope and strength during a time when I and others in New Orleans were embroiled in a fight to save public housing stock:

"My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears,
For the dawn draws near,
And the world is about to turn."

I am sad to say the public housing developments were eventually demolished, only increasing the displacement and homelessness that poor and black and working-class people in the city were already experiencing.

"Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long," wrote Martin Luther King, "but it bends toward justice." These words, along with Paul's words about all things becoming new, heal my tired soul and remind me to persist in hope for the world's turning, knowing all the while that the Spirit of God is moving, working alongside us for the liberation of all, breathing the new creation into being along with us.

Pam Nath lives and works in New Orleans, La., as a community organizer for Mennonite Central Committee Central States. She worships with a small group of people who meet at Hope House, the former home of Sr. Helen Prejean of Dead Men Walking fame. Before moving to New Orleans in 2007, Pam taught for 10 years as a professor of psychology at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

This is the third of four Bible studies on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 in The Mennonite *leading up to Pittsburgh 2011, the next Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, to be held July 4-9 in downtown Pittsburgh. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by this text and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.*

How singing often leads to an outpouring of emotion

Songweepers

by Lisa Schmucker Showalter

You may know one. You may even be one yourself. They are everywhere. I call them "songweepers." Songweepers are people who just can't seem to hold their emotions in check upon hearing or, especially, singing certain songs.

I coined this term several years ago, when my husband's (Brian's) uncle passed away. As we prepared the music for the funeral, there was speculation from the Troyers (Brian's maternal family) about whether or not they would be able to sing at the funeral due to the likelihood of crying.

The Troyers are not an emotional bunch. They're loving, warm, genuine and given to practical joking—or joking of any kind. But one would not define them as sappy. Brian's uncle Steve couldn't make sense of it. "I can be surrounded by blood, guts and all kinds of devastation and be fine, but if you throw a song into the middle of it, I'm a mess." Aunt Joyce tried a scientific approach, explaining, "There is a nerve directly attached to the vocal cord that goes into the part of the brain that controls tears. I'm fine until I open my mouth to sing." (I don't think this has been proven scientifically.)

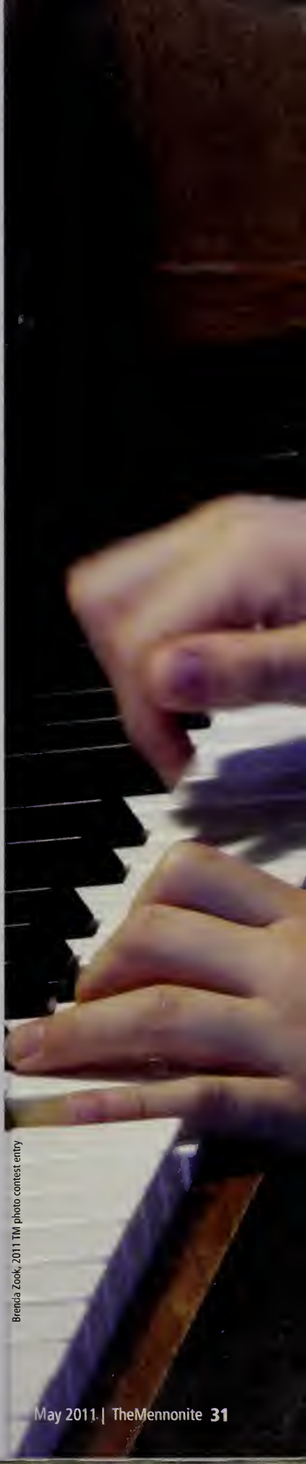
While the Troyers aren't a sappy bunch, they are a singing bunch. They sing together. When I first joined the family, we sang hymns at the dinner table prior to holiday meals. Not in a cheesy, contrived, Norman Rockwell painting sort of way but in a sincere, honest, enthusiastic way. They grew up singing together and taught all their children to sing together, and now all the in-laws have joined the song. For them, family memories are tied to singing. In fact, after Brian's grandmother passed away, no one, including Brian (who seems to have inherited the song-weeping gene), could sing her favorite hymn, "To Us a Child of Hope is Born," with a dry eye.

The music of the church helps us grapple with profound faith questions.

Memories are certainly key in tying emotion to singing. Music helps us retrieve memories. But followers of Christ get an added benefit. The music of the church helps us grapple with profound faith questions. It helps us experience the indefinable and divine love of God. For that reason, just one singing of an amazing text paired with a beautiful melody can have me fighting back tears. I am so thankful for God's infinite wisdom in creating this outlet and expression for us.

At the funeral, Brian and I turned around at one point and, sure enough, there stood his mom and aunt, singing and weeping. Psalm 108:1 says, "My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing and make music with all my soul." Sometimes, having all your soul in it means a little weeping, too. I say, songweepers unite. But someone will have to keep themselves composed enough to keep the song going.

Lisa Schmucker Showalter was minister of worship and music at North Main St. Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.



Brenda Zook, 2011 TM photo contest entry

www.commons.wikimedia.org

Christians in the early centuries forbade the death penalty.

Early challenges to capital punishment

by David W.T. Brattston

The earliest church prohibited Christians from participating in capital punishment, as is evident from the following pronouncements by Christian writers before the Decian Persecution of A.D. 249-251. This time period marks the 200th anniversary of the beginning of distinctively Christian literature. Dating from before the division into modern-day denominations, such writings are the common inheritance of all Christians.

> We, deeming that to see a man put to death is much the same as killing him, have abjured such spectacles.—Athenagoras

In addressing a rebellious faction in the church at Corinth, 1 Clement 45 recalls that when in the Old Testament the righteous were persecuted or put to death, it was only by the wicked, the unholy and the hate-consumed. Variously dated between A.D. 70 and 97, 1 Clement is one of the oldest extant Christian documents outside the New Testament. This letter was written while in the church at Rome "there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* [ANF]*: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*). It was so authoritative and influential that it was included in some early editions of the New Testament. It refers in passing to a recent government persecution of Christians, which means the death penalty was not far from the author's mind as a punishment for some acts and beliefs regarded as criminal.

Around A.D. 177, the philosopher Athenagoras of Athens wrote a defense of Christianity and description of its beliefs and practices. In it he dealt with and refuted pagan allegations that the Christian faith commands its adherents to murder and practice cannibalism. Athenagoras stated that Christians not only are forbidden to kill anyone for any reason but "cannot endure even to see a man put to death, though justly. ... We, deeming that to see a man put to death is much the same as killing him, have abjured such spectacles. How, then, when we do not even look on, lest we should contract guilt and pollution, can we put a man to death?" (Athenagoras Presbeia, *A Plea for the Christians*, ANF).

For this reason, he said, Christians oppose even such killing sanctioned by the law as gladiatorial combats, at that time perfectly legal and promoted by the secular authorities.

Tertullian was a prominent Roman lawyer prior to his conversion and ordination in middle age, which means he was probably familiar with death-penalty cases. Dating sometime between A.D. 198 and 220, Tertullian's *On Idolatry* indicates that Christians could not conscientiously inflict the death penalty. This treatise considers the dangers of contributing to sin inherent in certain professions and trades. One of these was the Roman military, partly because the higher ranks participated in capital punishments. For Tertullian, killing of any sort—including the state-ordered death penalty—excluded military service as a livelihood for Christians. In *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, he classified hangmen in the same category as lascivious women, gladiators and priests of a pagan cult.

Attributed to the central Italian bishop Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition* (A.D. 217) is similar. Even if possessing the necessary government authorization and ordered to do so, a soldier "must not execute men." As a corollary, the church must cast out any Christian who volunteers for military service. *The Apostolic Tradition* considers such soldiers and volunteers to be in the same category as pimps, priests of idols, makers of idols, gladiators and prostitutes.

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Bluffton expanding dual-enrollment options with Mennonite schools

Bluffton University is expanding an academic option that enables high school students to earn Bluffton credit by completing Bluffton courses—without leaving their school.

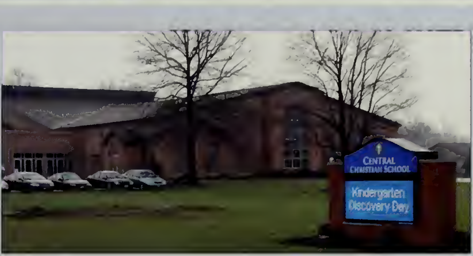
The university is working with three Mennonite high schools to enhance its dual-enrollment course offerings. Dual-enrollment courses are approved college courses taught by teachers at the high schools. They also give Bluffton the opportunity to connect with promising prospective students.

Bluffton has offered an English literature class at Central Christian High School in Kidron, Ohio, this academic year and is adding classes next fall in accounting, technology and mathematics: Classes are also planned for next year at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., in ceramics and psychology. Other possibilities are under consideration at both schools and at Lake Center Christian School in Hartville, Ohio, where two, semester-length American history courses have been offered this year.

The university also offers dual-enrollment courses at nearby public high schools, but Mennonite schools have been approached as well in an effort to enhance their students' interest in Bluffton. "We hope we will develop a good relationship with the schools and the students so Bluffton will be an option for them," says Dr. Gayle Trollinger, associate dean of academic affairs.

"We consider it a service to the church, too," she adds, noting that the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) has spearheaded a move for Mennonite institutions to offer classes at Mennonite high schools. "We want to be known for select programming of dual-enrollment courses."

At Mennonite colleges and universities, such courses "introduce students to the benefits of an Anabaptist-Mennonite education beyond high school," says Elaine Moyer, MEA associate director. "They have the opportunity to test their wings with college rigor and accumulate affordable college credit."



Bluffton's approach "ensures a relationship that will allow high school students to discover the importance of a Bluffton experience," she says.

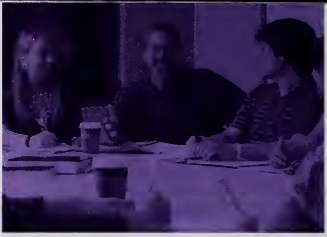
To enter the program, a student must either have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0—on a 4.0 scale—or be recommended by the course instructor. To be an instructor, the high school teacher must hold a master's degree in the content area or have earned at least 15 graduate credits in the content along with "extraordinary experience." In addition, teachers must have an administrative recommendation from their high school, as well as approval from the pertinent department chair at Bluffton.

Participating students pay $75 in tuition per dual-enrollment credit hour and gain online access to the university library and to Jenzabar, Bluffton's student-services system. Students receive Jenzabar account information, and a Bluffton student ID card, during a required orientation visit.

At the same time, they can sit in on the campus version of the class they will be taking or meet a faculty member who teaches in that subject area, says Chris Jebsen, Bluffton's admissions director. "It creates a good relationship with our faculty and exposes students to the real experience of taking classes here," he says, pointing out, too, that dual-enrollment students who ultimately enroll at the university are eligible for a $1,000 scholarship. "We embrace these students as Bluffton students."

Instructors must also spend at least a half day on campus for an orientation. They are not paid by the university but are classified as adjunct faculty for teaching the college-level material. A Bluffton faculty member is assigned to oversee each class.

Continued on back



LUFFTO
ASEBAL

Bluffton students to reach out in Pittsburgh

Ben Roeschley followed his older sister Leah to Bluffton University this year. This summer, he will join her and eight other Bluffton students at Pittsburgh 2011, where they will talk to prospective students about following their lead.

While the current students will have a high profile in and around the Bluffton booth, so, too, will the university's new mascot, J. Denny Beaver. Bluffton is also planning a Life-size Dutch Blitz tournament for youth and a July 5 gathering for alumni and friends, as well as three seminars for youth or youth sponsors presented by the Rev. Dr. Randy Keeler, associate professor of religion, and two adult seminars led by Dr. Gerald Mast, professor of communication.

Bluffton representatives will be among the student presenters at two other seminars for youth, about choosing a college and "Real Life at a Mennonite College," where they will share their experiences. The Bluffton students say they look forward to doing just that.

BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY
BLUFFTON TRACK AND FIELD
BE AV ER
BLUFFTON

Students representing Bluffton in Pittsburgh are (front row, left to right) Heidi Wiebe, Leah Roeschley, Allyson Christner, Alison Janzen, Melissa Hostetler and Crista Buller, and (back row, left to right) Adam Litwiller, Eliot Nofziger, Ben Roeschley and Jared Rohrer-Meck.

Leah Roeschley, a senior from Graymont, Ill., and Prairie View Mennonite Church in nearby Flanagan, says she plans to give Mennonite youth "real and personal insight" about Bluffton. "I want to help them discover if Bluffton can be a good fit for them," adds Roeschley, who also represented the university in Columbus in 2009.

That's when her brother Ben became familiar with Bluffton's student presence at the biennial event. "I had such a fun time at convention with my youth group and connecting with people in the Bluffton booth," he recalls. "It was actually during the convention that I decided how important going to a Mennonite college was to me.

"The experiences I had at the various booths made an impact on my future college decision. So when I heard that Bluffton was looking for students to take to Pittsburgh, I knew I had to apply," the first-year Bluffton student says, expressing his hope to make "a similar impact for many other prospective students."

Crista Buller, from Henderson, Neb., and its Bethesda Mennonite Church, is another first-year student with similar sentiments. "I have really enjoyed my time here and want to share this with others," says Buller, who has attended the last two conventions and is also excited "to worship with the wider church" again in Pittsburgh.

Worship is a focal point, too, for Heidi Wiebe, a junior from Millersburg, Ohio. "It's an amazing experience worshipping with thousands of people around you," notes Wiebe, a member of Martins Creek Mennonite Church in Millersburg. "I haven't been to a Mennonite convention since San Jose in 2007, and I am ready to be back."

"I'm also looking forward to interacting with the youth and hopefully getting several excited about Bluffton."

Making those connections is a priority for the university. "Our students are a good representation of us," says Chris Jebsen, Bluffton's admissions director. "The opportunity for prospective students to talk with them is a valuable component of our overall presence at the convention."

Adds Dr. Eric Fulcomer, vice president for enrollment management and student life: "Our goal is to interact with as many high school students as possible."

The Life-size Dutch Blitz tournament, involving huge cards and running players, presents another opportunity for interaction, as does an invitation that Bluffton has extended again this year to youth groups traveling to and from the convention. They can spend a night or two on campus for free, getting use of gym and other facilities, a tour and pizza in the process.

Bluffton students answer call to serve

Leroy Barber, president of the urban initiative Mission Year, issued a challenge to Bluffton students last October when he spoke during Spiritual Life Week on campus.

During spring break, 24 of them took him up on it.

Traveling to Atlanta the second week of March, the Bluffton contingent answered Barber's call to serve God by serving others. From March 7-11, the students worked in small groups in the Lakewood neighborhood of south Atlanta, largely on landscaping and trash pickup, including removal of discarded tires from a city park. They also helped with an assessment of neighborhood needs and with informing residents about a community meeting to address them.

Those concerns are many in a large neighborhood where, in places, nearly half the houses are vacant, said Stephen Intagliata, Bluffton's campus pastor who traveled to Atlanta as well. But the students also saw a commitment to community improvement by residents.

Their work was what struck Keith Suter most about the experience. "While there is strong support from volunteers and outside organizations, their work would be useless without the support and commitment of those already living in the area," noted Suter, a Bluffton junior from Pandora, Ohio, and Grace Mennonite Church.

Another junior, Andrew Keeler of Bluffton, offered an example of an effort at urban renewal. "When picking up trash, we came across a contractor who was renovating a worn-down house," said Keeler, a member of St. John Mennonite Church outside Pandora. "Despite being a single house in a large community of a big city, such work of preserving what was once lost signifies the hope that people have in Atlanta for their own city."

"I could sense their desire to make it once again a good and safe place to live," senior Marcus Unruh said, adding that he was "instilled with the same hope of what could become of the neighborhood. I have the desire to go back in five years just to see how things will have changed."

Most of the students stayed at GlenCastle, a former prison converted to affordable housing for the poor. They worked from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, spending the better part of one day hauling 230 discarded tires out of a ravine in South Bend Park. Their work on the needs assessment also entailed taking photos of houses and gathering data about them, such as whether they were occupied or vacant.

Marcus Unruh does the heavy lifting on a mulching project done by the Bluffton students.

A neighborhood resident was part of each of the seven groups of Bluffton students and staff, who also prepared a community garden for planting, painted trash cans and sorted and priced clothes at a thrift store.

In the evenings, they went to a community center to worship and listen to speakers interested in neighborhood revitalization. The speakers "talked about making the community a safe place for children to grow up," and about starting after-school activities, attracting business and creating jobs, Intagliata said.

The Bluffton workers also heard twice from Barber, an Atlanta resident who encouraged their efforts.

Andrea Allan, a first-year student from Fayette, Ohio, said the trip taught her "I can serve the Lord in my own community, and that I do not have to go far to see that there is need." Allan, a member of North Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon, Ohio, added that "it was neat to witness God in our own group as well as the community we were in."

Suter called the trip "a humbling reminder of the poverty that dominates many urban areas, as well as a reminder of the glimmers of hope that can arise from seemingly devastated communities."

Said Unruh, of Wayland, Iowa, and Wayland Mennonite Church: "I left Atlanta with the realization of how people can change the area they live in as long as they have the desire and the drive to do so."

Dual Enrollment *from page 1*

A group of Central Christian teachers and Eugene Miller, the school's head administrator, visited Bluffton in January for meetings about potential courses and a campus tour that included a look at the university's video conferencing room in Centennial Hall. A delegation from Bethany Christian got a similar tour in February, and "we're exploring what possibilities might exist with these schools through distance learning," Jebsen says. "We want Bluffton to be valued as a place that's open to new ways of delivering educational programs."

Availability of live streaming from Bluffton could create educational opportunities for Central Christian not possible with other prospective partner institutions, Miller says. In a February letter to parents announcing the expanded program, he wrote that 10 or more credits could be added through live streaming, contingent upon technology upgrades at the school.

Those credits, on top of the roughly 20 credits to be offered through traditional classes, could give Central Christian graduates up to 30 credit hours—about one year's worth of college credit before leaving high school. That's a goal, says Miller, noting that "economically, it will help our families a great deal."

"It also raises the expectation level of our students," getting them thinking about college earlier in high school, he continues. And he hopes they will consider Bluffton among their top three college choices for some of the same reasons why Central Christian chose the university as its dual-enrollment partner, as listed in his letter to parents—quality of education, as evidenced by the university's inclusion this year in *U.S.News & World Report's* top tier of Best Regional Colleges; "a strong tradition of character development" in students; opportunity for students to strengthen their faith; and "a strong focus on global education."

"We chose Bluffton because we wanted that kind of community" for Central Christian students, Miller says.

Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship

Christina Warner, legislative assistant for domestic affairs at the MCC office in Washington, D.C., led a workshop on "Hunger, Faith and Political Advocacy" at the 2011 Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship conference, which was held Feb. 18-20 at Bluffton. Ethical food production was the focus of the conference, which was planned by members of Bluffton's Peace Education and Action Community Endeavor (PEACE) Club. Ragan Sutterfield, a writer, teacher and gardener from Little Rock, Ark., was the keynote speaker. Participants screened the documentary film "Food Stamped" and attended workshops about injustices in the American food system and responses to them, as well as a session about genetically modified organisms.

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Bluffton's mission...to prepare all students for life, vocation, responsible citizenship and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom.

Bluffton faculty, staff and students aspire to carry out this mission through discovery, community, respect and service – including service to the church.

A partner with:

Mennonite Education Agency

The education agency of Mennonite Church USA

1 University Drive, Bluffton, Ohio 45817
www.bluffton.edu • 419.358.3000

The Book of the Laws of Regions, also called *On Fate*, is ascribed to Bardesanes, who, prior to his death in A.D. 220, was a friend and guest of a king of Edessa. It contains expositions of how the laws of various nations and regions differ from one another, while Christians follow their own law (what we would call ethics) no matter where they are, with this law being identical everywhere in the known world. Among the contrasts was that one particular country stoned thieves to death, with the implication that Christians did not do so anywhere, even where secular law permitted them to. Neither did Christians commit "honor killings" of wives and daughters, as non-Christians practiced in another country. In short, the Christian religion forbade all its adherents to inflict the death penalty for these offences.

In *Against Celsus*, the church father Origen in the late A.D. 240s contended that if Jews were free of Roman control and constituted their own sovereign nation again, they would probably practice stoning and burning of malefactors, as Moses had commanded. However, Origen wrote, if Christians were in government, they would be restrained by the laws of their religion from doing so. He wrote that God's purpose in destroying the Jewish state was partly to end capital punishment and other bloodshed by the people of God. Origen was dean of the world's foremost educational institution of the era (in Alexandria, Egypt) and later established one of his own in Palestine. He was the most influential and prolific Christian preacher, Bible scholar and writer of his day and for centuries afterward. He was probably the most knowledgeable Christian of the first half of the third century, or at least the most able to relate the consensus of ancient Christian teaching, because he was one of the most traveled, being called upon as a consultant by bishops throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

Of the extant Christian documents I have examined from this period, these are the only authors to have considered the death penalty from the viewpoint of Christian ethics, and all considered it forbidden to Christians, even where permitted by secular law, and would be so if ever Christianity constituted the government of a state. From these surviving records, it is clear that Christian writers discountenanced capital punishment in each of the first three centuries.

Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* has been cited as an early Christian source in favor of state-inflicted capital punishment because Clement applied the analogy of surgery to the death penalty: Just as a surgeon excises a diseased member or organ lest it harm the whole body, so it would be good to put to death any member of society that "falls into any incurable evil."

Christian writers discountenanced capital punishment in each of the first three centuries.

However, there are five reasons Clement cannot be construed as justifying the death penalty. First, he considered the execution to be beneficial to the wrongdoer: "It will be for his good if he is put to death." Second, the relevant passage also declares that "it is the highest and most perfect good, when one is able to lead back anyone from the practice of evil to virtue and well-doing, which is the very function of the law." Third, the only specific example Clement gave of "incurable evil" was covetousness, which was not a capital offence or a criminal offence at all. Fourth, Clement wrote *Stromata* for pagan readers and used examples, quotations from pagan philosophers, current Greco-Roman views on morality, and other sources for the purpose of persuading them to embrace or think more highly of Christianity. He was the leading Christian intellectual of the A.D. 190s, Origen's predecessor as dean of the Christian school in Egypt, and a pioneer in making Christianity acceptable to educated pagans.

Fifth, an ancient analogy that a non-Christian government justifiably inflicts the death penalty does not mean that a Christian may in good conscience be an executioner or otherwise contribute to it. What the other authors cited in this article were expounding was Christian morality, i.e. the ethics taught and practiced by Christians. Because what they described was specifically Christian, unlimited in geography and binding even if they attained political office, the ancients would no more have extended official Roman conduct to present-day believers than they would other objectionable practices of the Roman Empire.

David W. T. Brattston lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

Works cited

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Eerdmans, 1885-96)

The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus of Rome translated and edited by Gregory Dix, revised Henry Chadwick (Morehouse, 1992)

Athenagoras, Presbeia, *A Plea for the Christians*

Tertullian, *On Idolatry*

Ministry and money

Beryl Jantzi is the stewardship education director for Everence, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA.

Lack of money is a problem for the clergy, but a bigger problem is our lack of knowledge, skill and confidence to give effective leadership on money issues.—Dan Hotchkiss, *Ministry and Money*

Money is an important tool for all organizations, including the church. However, pastors generally receive little if any formal training in basic financial principles or personal money management. Yet they are expected to have all aspects of their personal life in order, including their household finances, so they can be good models for the community. In reality, many pastors—like many lay members—struggle with managing their personal finances, according to Dan Hotchkiss in his book *Ministry and Money*.

Supporting our pastors: School debt is part of this growing problem for graduating seminarians entering congregations across the country. Preparing for the pastorate requires significant financial sacrifice on the part of those who commit to a seminary education.

A 2005 report by the Center for the Study of Theological Education titled "The Gathering Storm: The Educational Debt of Theological Students" states that with the growing cost of education, many seminarians graduate with a debt greater than what they can afford to pay back on a pastor's salary. A suggestion for congregations who value seminary-trained pastors is to factor an educational assistance line into their salary and benefits package to help pay down their pastor's educational debt. Another recommendation is to set up a seminary assistance fund to be used by others in the congregation who are following a call to ministry.

It's understandable that smaller congregations may not always be able to provide adequate compensation for their pastor. But rather than setting full-time expectations and compensating at a part-time level, they should establish responsibilities on par with the remuneration. The congregation can affirm their pastor in seeking additional part-time employment until the church can increase his or her compensation.

Because of ministry demands and compensation challenges, I know of parents who have discouraged their young adult children from pursuing a call to the ministry. Congregations as well as denominational and seminary leaders need to work at calling, equipping and supporting pastors and other church leaders.

Pastoral involvement in congregational finances: In my role as a stewardship educator for Everence and Mennonite Church USA, I've been surprised to observe the variety of congregational financial functions a pastor may or may not be asked to carry. One pastor I spoke with is expected to count the offering and deposit the money after Sunday worship (a bad idea). Other pastors are not expected and not invited to be part of congregational stewardship or finance committee meetings (another bad idea).

Some clergy are glad to be relieved of having anything to do with the financial matters of the congregation. I find this unfortunate. Clergy should be able to understand and discuss basic financial budgetary issues. When we don't involve pastors in financial decision-making processes, we compartmentalize finances and deem them "less spiritual" than other activities of the church. Without conscious intention, we communicate that our use of money lies outside the spiritual call and responsibilities of the church. Money is a gift of God and a valuable resource that requires as much pastoral attention as other ministries of the church.

Pastors need to be as literate in speaking the language of finance as they are in parsing Greek verbs and exegeting Scripture.

Being able to speak meaningfully to the financial issues Jesus and the prophets addressed more than 2,300 times in Scripture requires some knowledge and awareness of how money functions in the life of the congregation as well as in the lives of its members. I applaud those congregations whose pastors are involved in the financial conversations and decision-making issues of the church.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5:17-20 (NIV) that "the [church] worker deserves his wages." In turn, church workers need to be involved in the financial ministry of their congregations. Money is a gift of God, and pastors need to be as literate in speaking the language of finance as they are in parsing Greek verbs and exegeting Scripture. TM

Are you a smart phone?

Does multitasking make our lives easier? This was an impromptu discussion I had recently with two other women. The conversation started when we began talking about balancing jobs outside the home and home life. We realized that much of the time spent at home is multitasking. We gather the laundry and on the way pick up shoes and drop them off in the appropriate rooms while thinking about the dinner that needs to be made. Then we head off to work. We want to make time in the evening to be with our children, but sometimes it's hard to do—for example, when the kids don't have any clean cloth diapers.

My mind went back to one morning that week, a pretty average morning. This is how I remember it. I gather the dirty diapers from the kids' rooms, put them in the washer and load the dishwasher. While I'm doing this, I'm thinking of what to do next: getting my kids' breakfast ready (one oatmeal and one rice cereal), and at some point I need to feed myself. But coffee comes first, so I put the oatmeal in the microwave and turn to the coffee maker. In the meantime, I hear crying in the living room, so I stop midway in the coffee- and oatmeal-making process to see what happened. After some kisses and hugs, I return once again to the kitchen, trying to remember what I was doing. The microwave dings; the oatmeal is ready. I see the coffee bean container and remember, Oh yes, I was making coffee. So while the oatmeal cools, I continue with the coffee making and pull the rice cereal from the cupboard. I try to get everything organized on the kitchen table. This includes setting out the cereals, milk, vitamins, coffee, juice, bibs and spoons before I gather the kids for breakfast. And finally we sit down to eat, and I'm exhausted.

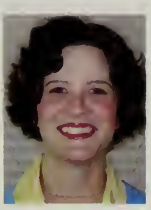
It's important now and then to take a deep breath and remember why we do what we do.

Do all these things really help? Many tasks can be done at the push of a button, so we can simultaneously do laundry, wash dishes, warm food and check e-mail. We are sold the line that we should be multitasking. We can now have a phone conversation and check e-mail on the same device at the same time, says a commercial I saw one night. I wondered then, Where did this idea of multitasking come from? I researched online and discovered that the term first related to computers in the 1960s and referred to a computer's ability to do more than one task at a time. It wasn't until the late 1990s that multitasking referred to something humans did. So a word once used to describe computers is now used to describe us. Wow. Is that how we are to live our lives, working and living like machines? I hope not.

That said, I don't want to go back to the days of washing clothes by hand, and I do use a smart phone. So what are we to do? When I feel overwhelmed, I ask myself, Why I'm doing this? "This" means working a full-time job while raising two small children with my husband. I do it because I feel called to pastoral ministry and to being a wife and mother. God has called each of us to a particular life, and sometimes we need to be texting while vacuuming, but that's not how it should always be. In the midst of a busy, multitasking life, it's important now and then to take a deep breath and remember why we do what we do.

Reflecting on why we do what we do opens the door to a check-in with God. It allows us to ask questions such as, Am I living the life God wants to me lead? What things do I need to keep doing and what things do I need to adjust? We all need check-ins now and then.

This morning I could have gathered dishes and started the dishwasher while organizing the mail on the kitchen counter, but instead I sat down with my children and read books until their nanny arrived. Once she arrived I gave my kids one last kiss, grabbed my purse, keys, lunch and walked out the door. For once I felt relaxed as I started the car. When I arrived at work, I felt surprisingly alert and ready to take on my tasks for the day. It's tough to balance work and home life, but I think what makes the difference is knowing when to stop multitasking and focus on one thing, whether at work or at home. I could have made the choice to run around the house multitasking, but I didn't. I slowed down and did only one thing; I read books with my children on my lap.



Rachel Ringenberg Miller is pastor of community life at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Must wars be fought to bring about peace?

Paul Leatherman is a member of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (Pa.).

Popular thought today seems to support the idea that wars must be fought to bring about lasting peace. If the "bad guys" are killed, then peace will reign. To carry this thought to the extreme would mean Christians should kill all the people in the world who are not Christians, then peace would be here permanently, since all the people in the world would be Christians. The thinking that drives the policies of many countries, both in the past and in the present day, sees peace as the end product of armed conflict.

A new orientation is required that sees peace as the premise rather than the conclusion of one's methodology. This means we must develop a theology of peace so that governments are actively working toward establishing structures in society and relationships among people that will help insure peace.

If it is important that we accept the sacrifices and the disruption of our daily lives required for national defense and security, why do we not accept that peacemaking will also require similar sacrifices and disruption of our lives?

Peacemaking will require sacrifices and disruption of our lives.

The cost of fighting a war has now risen to billions of dollars annually. And the related costs of paying health and retirement benefits and other associated costs to veterans will result in more millions of dollars each year to be paid by this generation as well as our children and grandchildren. Nonetheless, large amounts of money are being spent for the development of new weapons of destruction. The budgetary allocations for the military are growing at a rapid rate, while the money available for entitlement programs and for social needs is used to pay for war. There has been a genuine mortgaging of the social well-being of the nation to pay for futile wars.

From mid-1966 through mid-1968 I was working under the auspices of Vietnam Christian Services, assisting refugees in South Vietnam caught in the crossfires of the war. Many houses were bombed by U.S. helicopters just across the street from our home in Saigon. I witnessed other bombing raids and saw many wounded and maimed men, women and children. More than 50,000 U.S. soldiers were killed in that war, and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese were killed. The United States left Vietnam in 1975 in apparent defeat. What a futile war! And now it is involved in two similarly futile wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many people are experiencing serious disruptions in their lives because of the transfer of funds from entitlement programs to the defense budget. Given this set of priorities for defense spending, we may find ourselves in the ironic position of being the best-defended nation in the world but having nothing worth defending because the quality of life has utterly disappeared.

Our security as people of faith must be in a loving, caring God. Our government's security seems to depend on dominating the world with the greatest and most costly military might used indiscriminately to protect American interests at home and abroad. As people of faith we must insist that our government unilaterally begin disarmament of the military-industrial complex.

The U.S. Empire is in decline. If the current level of military spending is not drastically reduced, the U.S. Empire will collapse along with its economic dominance. It already appears the United States is approaching the limit of its borrowing capacity from China and others.

The Pentagon's sole purpose is to build weapons of mass destruction and fight wars. The military-industrial complex enjoys vast profits selling military hardware. The Pentagon and the military-industrial complex are dominating the U.S. agenda. It appears President Obama, like all the presidents before him since World War II, is unable to override the military establishment that has planted great fear in the American people, convincing us that wars are the only way to keep us safe. This has resulted in making us less secure than at almost any time in U.S. history.

We Anabaptists are supporting this evil empire unless we raise our voices of concern about our U.S. war policies. Some of us have tried to do this, but our voices have been drowned out by the voices of fear coming from the Pentagon and the corporate war profiteers. We need to find a way to unite our voices.

A small group is trying to start a national movement to convince our policymakers to reduce military expenditures and use money instead to promote peace. To join this movement and learn about how to make your voice heard, go to www.1040forPeace.org. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, The Mennonite or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Executive Board confronts funding troubles

Iris De León-Hartshorn will begin as director of transformative peacemaking.

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (EB) prepared for the delegate assembly at Pittsburgh 2011 during its meeting at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church April 14-16. This included the board's plans for a "Pittsburgh Experiment" at both the 2011 and 2013 conventions. The Pittsburgh Experiment means delegates will discern together but not vote on resolutions. The experiment will require a two-thirds vote by delegates before the experiment is implemented that week.

EB members worked on executive director Ervin Stutzman's draft of a Purposeful Plan that would update the 2001-2011 organizational strategy document adopted at Nashville 2001. EB members also drafted an updated and expanded version of the four churchwide priorities—holistic witness, antiracism, leadership development and global connections—to bring to delegates at Pittsburgh 2011. The expanded list will most likely include seven priorities. The members will finalize the list in a conference call in May.

The EB's discussion also focused more extensively on the "antiracism" priority and possible new ways and words to describe that churchwide priority.

First Fruits flaws: EB members addressed the board's financial situation and flaws in the current First Fruits funding system: an understanding that individuals tithe to their churches and churches tithe to area conferences. In turn, area conferences, schools and agencies tithe to Mennonite Church USA. Mennonite Church USA then tithes to Mennonite World Conference. The EB also approved changing its fiscal year so that is begins on Aug. 1 instead of Feb. 1. The change will go into effect this summer.

"The First Fruits funding system strains under the weight of ongoing budgetary commitments," Stutzman said in a written report to the board, "with support from a shrinking demographic base, which affects the funds available to EB ... it is time to review the First Fruits funding system, beginning with some honest and open conversation in all parts of Mennonite Church USA."

Stutzman said the trend is common to many denominations, with decreasing offering-plate money given to institutions. Church schools and other agencies have realized this shift and hired development directors to raise funds, he said.

Marty Lehman, director of churchwide operations, offered the example with the merger of Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media, to be called MennoMedia. MPN has not made a contribution for the past two years due to its financial situation, and MennoMedia is not projecting a contribution for the next three years, accounting for a $100,000 loss to the EB budget.

"Executive Board staff is too dependent on the agencies for revenue," she wrote in her report. "It is not a long-term, sustainable model."

Lehman and Glen Guyton, director for constituent resources, named the ways Mennonite Church USA has taken measures to cut costs, such as a 5 percent pay cut for the executive cabinet staff, suspending a staff enrichment program, no cost-of-living increases, decreasing contributions to employee retirement accounts and decreasing the full-time equivalency of staff members by about three—mostly at the administrative assistant level.

Guyton said Pittsburgh 2011 registration, especially for the youth, is behind previous years. So the convention planning staff plans to manage expenses with the understanding that Pittsburgh 2011 may not raise as much revenue as past conventions (see related editorial on page 64).

Stutzman said the financial challenges offer a time to set priorities for Mennonite Church USA. He encouraged the board to address its funding problems before it becomes more serious. Stutzman said the next step is to bring questions about the First Fruits system to the governance council meeting in May.

In two different sessions, the EB reviewed its decision to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix. The discussion included some debriefing, confession and a discussion of racism and power imbalances. The board also did some planning for Phoenix 2013.

It is time to review the First Fruits funding system, beginning with some honest and open conversation in all parts of Mennonite Church USA.—Ervin Stutzman

Iris De León-Hartshorn, conference minister for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, will serve in a new role as Mennonite Church USA director for transformative peacemaking (see page 49). Her responsibilities will include antiracism training, immigration issues and coordinating with groups like Iglesia Menonita Hispana. Rachel Swartzendruber Miller will leave her role as director of convention planning but continue in that role through Pittsburgh 2011.

Executive Board will next meet Sept. 15-17 in Newton, Kan., and participate in an open house for the Newton office. An all-boards meeting is slated for April 12-14, 2012, in the Elkhart and Goshen, Ind., area in connection with the dedication of the new Elkhart office building.—*Anna Groff*

SALTer learns Arabic sign language and Braille

Mennonite Central Committee volunteer works in Jordanian deaf-blind unit.

Trish Konic

Brent Stutzman, right, is an MCC volunteer at a school in Salt, Jordan. Director Andrew de la Carpentier, center, watches Muhammad, left, as he selects the Braille card for a food he will eat for lunch. Marley Mendoza, press tour member, is in the background.

Brent Stutzman is special, says Andrew de la Carpentier, director of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt in Jordan.

Stutzman, a Mennonite from Hutchinson, Kan., is working through Mennonite Central Committee's SALT program as a volunteer for three years. After earning a biology degree from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., he decided it was time to "take a leap out of my comfort zone and context and commit myself to serving others."

Stutzman volunteered in Jordan at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf to work with correspondence, English curriculum or vocational training. The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, was founded in 1964. Since then, it has been in an almost continual state of expansion, trying to meet some of the great needs in Jordan and throughout the Middle East.

Instead, Stutzman found himself assigned to the deaf-blind unit and specifically to Muhammad, a 16-year-old student. Knowing nothing about deaf-blind education and little if any Arabic, he says, "I was thrown into the fire." The deaf-blind unit, developed eight years ago, is now home to eight children. Muhammad is one of the original two boys who opened the unit. The first week Stutzman watched and observed. The second week he began working. The third week the students had a vacation, so he spent it reading and learning what he could before the break was over.

Stutzman began learning Arabic sign language and Arabic Braille in order to communicate with Muhammad. But Muhammad had "language with form but not function." He didn't understand how to use language to communicate his needs or thoughts. He could "memorize massive amounts of concepts and conversation but used it as a programmed response."

Now halfway through his three-year commitment, Stutzman continues to create an Arabic deaf-blind curriculum, the first in Jordan and maybe in the Arabic world.

With no Arabic model to follow, he says, "I have had a long road of many failures. I spent the first eight months in orientation, just learning, as I began developing my own program. The challenge is staying one step ahead of Muhammad while continuing to learn Arabic, set goals and evaluate them and develop activities for learning."

But it is evident from the progress of his student that he has achieved a shorter road to success. When his zipper is stuck, for instance, Muhammad has learned to ask for help from other students rather than just standing helplessly. When he notices something missing, like his pillow, he asks for it. These are major achievements for a young man who knew words but did not know how to use them to communicate.

Although Stutzman works in a one-on-one situation, his intention is to help change cultural outlooks about what it means to be disabled. No longer left in a room by themselves, the students at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf are not perceived as helpless. Muhammad can now "go to the store, pick out a soda and pay for it himself."

Stutzman's goal is to have the family and community see the potential in each child, causing a paradigm shift in perception.

"People outside the school do not see his potential," he says. "His disability should not define who he is." Muhammad's grandfather took a sign language course, and now his mother is learning sign language. They are expanding their communication with him when he goes home on weekends.

"Finding out what it means to serve has been a great challenge," Stutzman says.—*Patricia (Trish) Edwards-Konic is currently the pastor of two rural Quaker churches in southeast Colorado. She previously was editor of* Quaker Life *magazine and* Friends United Press. *She participated in a press tour sponsored by the Jordan Tourism Board in March.*

Tanzanian president orders 1,000 books by Shenk

Eastern Mennonite Missions' global consultant meets the country's president.

"We didn't expect it to happen, but it was an amazing meeting," says David W. Shenk, global consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions. "It was remarkable that the president and prime minister of Tanzania broke out of a cabinet meeting to talk with us about cultivating peacemaking relations between Muslims and Christians. We had an excellent discussion together."

David Shenk is referring to an unusual meeting that he, his wife, Grace, and Mennonite Bishop Amos Muhagachi had with the president and the prime minister of Tanzania on March 14 in the State House in Dar es Salaam.

Shenk and Grace were in Tanzania to participate in a week of seminars sponsored by the Dodoma Diocese of the Mennonite Church. Bishop Amos Muhagachi, a friend of the president and the prime minister, arranged the last-minute meeting.

"His Excellence Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete is a Muslim who is concerned about keeping the harmonious relationships between Muslims and Christians in Tanzania," Shenk says. "The Prime Minister Peter Pinda is a Christian who is equally committed to peace."

Shenk says that new mosques are being built all over Tanzania right now; mosques are even appearing in towns with no Muslim populations, funded by countries like Libya. Shenk says President Kikwete and Prime Minister Pinda want to be proactive about keeping the peace in Tanzania.

Both men were familiar with the book Shenk co-authored with Badru D. Kateregga, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. The book was recently released in Swahili, the main language in Tanzania.

"They knew the book and felt it would be a useful tool in promoting understanding within the country," Shenk says. "President Kikwete ordered 1,000 copies of the book.

"This is exactly why we wrote the book," he says. "We had the modest goal that it would build understanding between Muslims and Christians. There is so much that the two groups don't know about each other. The first step to maintaining peace is to know each other."

The population of Tanzania is 42 million people, with about half being Christian and a third being Muslim, according to Shenk.

"Tanzania models a deep commitment to the separation of church and the Muslim ummah from the state," Shenk says. "They have modeled a healthy approach to pluralistic societies wherein people are free to worship and bear witness to their faith in an atmosphere of respectful appreciation of the reality that Tanzania is home to a wide variety of religions."—*Linda Moffett of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Uislamu na Ukristo

Freddy Maro

David W. Shenk presents a copy of *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* to President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania. Bishop Amos Muhagachi of the Mennonite Church in Tanzania looks on.

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13-22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23-July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22-August 4)
MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (Sept. 19-28)
A PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE (September 20-30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-18)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE II with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct.12-22)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada
Reg. #S0014322
2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

21 trapped by Ivory Coast violence, worship anyway

Mennonite Mission Network mission associate serves as 'mama' of the building.

Photo provided

From left: Martine Audéoud, Antony (currently in university in the United States), Samuel and Gary Wittig

Mennonite Mission Network mission associates Gary Wittig and Martine Audéoud (Gilead Mennonite Church in Chesterville, Ohio) and their 3-year-old son, Samuel, hunkered down inside their Abidjan home as the violence between the two men who claim to be Ivory Coast's president—longtime president Laurent Gbagbo and United Nations-backed Alassane Ouattara—neared their home.

At one point, Wittig filmed video of machine-gun fire right outside their fifth-story window. There were also 18 other people trapped in the building, many without food. Several families also live in the building. Audéoud took the opportunity to feed them physically and spiritually. This is her story.

In Martine Audéoud's words: "Since the troubles started last Thursday (March 31) afternoon, some of the building's janitors and guards were unable to go home. Others had brought their families in search of refuge, as they live in areas where there is a high level of insecurity. They didn't have any food with them. Earlier in the week, I had bought about 50 pounds of rice, a box of canned sardines and tomato paste, just in case we would need it. And that Thursday, I understood why I did that.

"There are about 18 people in the building without food. In the morning, I make them coffee with lots of sugar and cook rice with milk and sugar. In the evening, I serve rice and a sauce with sardines. Now I am the 'mama' of the building. They also come to me for Ibuprofen, as several of them have had malaria or fever.

"On Sunday afternoon, I suggested that we have a prayer time, as we couldn't go to church. They were happy to do that. Most of them are Christians, and a few Muslims. I told them to meet at 3 p.m. in a room that we knew was available. When I arrived, they were all sitting on the floor alongside the walls of that room, including some Muslim workers. We started worship with prayer and a few songs that we all knew. Then we read and commented on Romans 8:31-39. I had them repeat the verse several times so that it would sink in: 'Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.' I felt that this gave them hope.

"Then I asked them to give testimonies of how the Lord had already saved them in their lives. Two of them gave powerful testimonies that were encouraging to the group. Finally, we closed with a time of prayer and intercession for our families, our city and our nation. I couldn't understand all their prayers, as some of them were praying in their own language. We felt united before the Lord. After all was done, one of them asked to pray for me. That was touching, too. Then we got up and greeted each other with a handshake, as we usually do at the end of a church service. This time of worship helped us refocus on the Lord's love—a love that not even war can separate us from."

As of April 4, Martine, Gary and Samuel have evacuated to Dakar, Senegal. They are waiting for a visa from the French Embassy for their son, Samuel, and plan to spend the next few weeks in France with Martine's father while teaching classes online. On April 11, the former president, Laurent Gbagbo, was captured.

Wittig and Audéoud have lived in Ivory Coast for two years. (Audéoud worked for five years in the Ivory Coast in the 1990s.) Wittig teaches at the International Community School, and Audéoud is associate director of master's programs in holistic development at the Theological Seminary of the Christian Alliance.—*Andrew Clouse of Mennonite Mission Network*

• • travel with a purpose • •

Mennonite Your Way

NE & SW TOURS
(Northeast & Southwest)
JULY & OCTOBER 2011

Cape Cod & Mansions, ***July 18-22***
- Mystic Seaport Village (CT)
- Kennedy Compound
- Cranberry Farm & Bog
- Whale Watch
- Martha's Vineyard
- Breakers Mansion (RI)

(departure from Lancaster, PA)

Balloons & Parks, ***Oct. 3-23***
- Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta
- Acoma Pueblo - "sky city"
- National Parks: Petrified, Painted, Grand Canyon, Saguaro, Carlsbad
- Jeep Rides to Canyons
- Santa Fe & Window Rocks

(Lancaster, PA, pick-ups, fly-in)

MYW Tours • Box 425 • Landisville, PA 17538 • 717/653-9288 • 800/296-1991
Email: myw1525@aol.com • web: www.mywtours.com

Young adults and retirees connect in Tucson

Intergenerational teams of Mennonite volunteers work together in Arizona.

When Walter Good first told Lorene, his wife, that he wanted to do winter service in Tucson, Ariz., she told him she wasn't ready yet. As an active teacher, Lorene wanted to keep working for a few more years. Walter agreed but kept bringing up the possibility of SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People) in Tucson. Finally, at age 67, Lorene decided it was time to retire and go.

"I knew I could always volunteer in the summertime, but Walter [who is a farmer] could volunteer in the winter," she says. And so the Minier, Ill., couple headed to Tucson in their RV to test the waters and see if they liked it. That was 14 years ago; they have gone back every year since.

SOOP, a Mennonite Mission Network service program for adults and families, has locations across North America, and Tucson is one of them. A community of Mennonites has grown there, based around Shalom Mennonite Fellowship and supported by the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit and the SOOPers.

Because Lorene has been going to Tucson for so many years, the local food bank has allowed her to do filing in their office one day a week, a job they don't usually give to volunteers. She also has volunteered in school classrooms, and this year she worked two days a week at the Adaptation Station, a business that makes everything from furniture to toys for clients with physical and cognitive disabilities.

Walter works for Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona, going into the community to make repairs on homes that are owned by people who might otherwise not be able to afford to fix them. The repair groups go out in pairs, a SOOPer and a MVS member together, sometimes with local residents who volunteer, too.

"SOOP is the backbone of our organization," says Scott Coverdale, the director of Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona. "They bring depth, history and patience."

He says that the intergenerational teams of Mennonite volunteers grow together and learn from each other.

"It can be challenging to have different generations working together," he says. "People have had to learn to respect each other and adapt expectations. It's a great added dimension in learning and working with others."

"I appreciate the wealth of experience and skill that SOOPers bring," says Miriam Regier, a Tucson MVSer who works at the home repair organization. "They usually use some trick that I can learn, like setting a door on shims while hanging it to get just the right height."

Regier says she appreciates the thoroughness and resourcefulness of the SOOPers as they work on projects, not to mention the additional hands they bring every year.

"This year the SOOPers nearly doubled our crew," she says, "making it possible for us to repair more homes."

Arloa Bontrager

Walter Good, right, and Miriam Regier, left, work together on a water heater as part of a home repair ministry started by SOOPers and Shalom Mennonite Fellowship.

The SOOPers live in various places—some in their RVs, some in the former MVS house and some with Shalom members. There is also a room in the current MVS house where the SOOPers gather for fun.

Because a number of the SOOPers live on the same campus as the MVS house and use the house washing machine and clothesline, there are plenty of the small, ordinary interactions that happen when people share space.

"They're good neighbors," says Regier. "One SOOPer put some love and time into making our compost healthier, others fixed several of our dining room chairs and our front door."

One night a group of Mennonites from Colombia came to visit Tucson, and the SOOPers invited them to play games—an event that turned into a spontaneous question-and-answer time with a translator. It helped educate the SOOPers about everyday life in Colombia, dispelling perceptions about drugs and violence often reflected in the U.S. media.

For the Goods, their commitment to Tucson for the past 14 years comes from their enjoyment of the place and from their desire to serve. "We really enjoy the service and we really enjoy the church there," Lorene says. "I think throughout our lives we've been interested in serving the church, and this is just one of the ways we can continue as long as we have the health to do it."—*Melanie Hess of Mennonite Mission Network*

Ministering to CEOs and those living in poverty

Pastors Day to focus on serving people with various socioeconomic backgrounds

How does one minister to CEOs, to those who live in poverty and to everyone in between? Working with people from various socioeconomic backgrounds will be the focus of this year's Pastors Day, an event hosted by Mennonite Church USA in conjunction with the 2011 convention in Pittsburgh. The gathering will be held Monday, July 4, with the theme "Leading Communities of Healing and Hope."

Thiessen Nation

Stahl-Wert

"It's great to gather with peers from all over the country and hear what ministry is like for them," says Jayne Byler, pastor of First Mennonite Church in Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Byler participated in Pastors Day at the Columbus 2009 convention and plans on attending this year's event as well.

"It's good to know that the role of pastor is valued in the Mennonite church today and that time and resources are being given to make sure our pastors are nurtured and empowered to keep serving," she says.

Terry Shue, director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA, says that during the seminar, participants will hear stories of how their peers are being challenged, especially as the denomination strives to be more missionally minded.

The keynote speakers will be Mary Thiessen Nation, affiliate professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and John Stahl-Wert, author, president/CEO of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation and a former pastor.

Both Thiessen Nation, who spent 18 years ministering in a violent Los Angeles neighborhood, and Stahl-Wert, an author known for his leadership development work in Pittsburgh, will discuss their ministries in different socioeconomic contexts.

"This is the first time that we'll have had two speakers at Pastors Day," says Shue. "I am especially looking forward to hearing them cast a vision of the multicultural, missional church that God has called us to be." The first Pastors Day was held at San José 2007.

Following the keynote addresses, Shue will lead table group discussions in which participants will have the opportunity to learn about one another's ministries in a smaller group setting.

"It is my highest hope that those at the various table groups can form relationships with people they don't know," says Shue, "and that they can come away inspired and informed with an undergirded spirit of creativity and risk-taking.

"This is not about telling pastors what they should do," Shue says. "We want to inspire them through hearing each other's stories so that they can ignite the creativity of people in their congregations across the nation. We want to explore what God is already up to and what God might be calling us to do."

Rosie Epp, pastor of Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church in Sioux Fall, S.D., says that the timing of Pastors Day allows her "to get some continuing education in without taking extra time from my schedule."

"It's also a good time to connect and reconnect with other pastors, some of whom I only see at these events," she says. "I appreciate the planners bringing in good speakers and addressing current topics."

This year, music will be provided by singer/songwriter Brad Yoder, who has been nominated multiple times as "best acoustic/solo artist" by the *Pittsburgh City Paper*. Yoder will lead the group in a time of worship as well as a concert over lunch.

Also during lunch, Larry Miller, Everence president, and Beryl Jantzi, stewardship education director of Everence—the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA—will give a brief presentation. Everence is helping sponsor the event.

"We are grateful for the generous support of Everence, who has made it possible for us to hold the event at a much reduced cost for the pastors," says Shue.

All pastors are invited to join in the conversations at Pastors Day. The cost to participate is $35, which includes lunch and a snack. Pastors' spouses also are encouraged to attend.

For more information, see online: http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Convention/—*Anna Yoder and Mennonite Church USA staff. Pittsburgh 2011, the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, will be held July 4-9 in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center downtown Pittsburgh, Pa. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.*

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

Conference leaders deal with differences

Constituency Leaders Council discusses immigration and theology.

Chris Rahe

From left: Carl Walcott, district minister for Southeast Mennonite Conference, and Carol Roth, staff leader of Native Mennonite Ministries, serve Communion to Gene Miller, conference minister for New York Mennonite Conference.

Representatives from each of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences and five constituency groups reported at the spring meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) March 28-30 at Sauder Village in Archbold, Ohio.

Common themes included dealing with differences—from immigration to theology—and staying in conversation, resourcing pastors and congregations and new church plants.

The CLC met its diversity goals for the meeting with a makeup that was 43 percent female and 23 percent members of under-represented racial/ethnic groups.

Each morning began with a Dwelling in the Word session focused on 1 Corinthians 3:1-17 and led by Iris De León-Hartshorn, executive conference minister for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference and CLC vice chair. Participants focused on the passage in silence and then in table groups, responding to questions posed by the leader.

Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, reported on the "Pittsburgh Experiment," a proposed change in the format of delegate sessions at convention that will be presented to delegates as an option at Pittsburgh 2011. Rather than using delegate time to present and adopt formal resolutions, delegates would engage in dialogue with each other, discern denominational priorities together and spend time in Dwelling in the Word sessions. CLC members affirmed this idea.

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, and Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA, shared the results of a recent CLC study in response to the Executive Board's decision to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix in spite of the state's new immigration legislation. Table groups spent time discussing questions about the 2013 convention.

Juan Montes, moderator of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, spoke on behalf of IMH regarding the 2013 convention location. Montes assured the CLC that members of IMH consider themselves Mennonite now more than ever.

Worship was led all three days by Chuck Neufeld, executive conference minister for Illinois Mennonite Conference, Anita Amstutz, pastor of Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church, Donna Mast, interim conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference, and Zenobia Sowell-Bianchi, member of the African-American Mennonite Association board.

Willard Metzger, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, also brought greetings.

The CLC's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 24-26 in Halifax, Pa.—*Chris Rahe of Mennonite Church USA*

Recipe for disaster:
1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS
Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

First certified Anabaptist educator

Dietzel completed four Anabaptist Learning Institute courses.

Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Schools Council has named Daniel Dietzel, a Bible and English teacher at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School (LMS), as the first recipient of the MEA seal as a certified Anabaptist educator. Dietzel completed all four courses offered by the Anabaptist Learning Institute (ALI), a joint program of MSC and MEA, designed to provide a Christ-centered orientation and professional education program for teachers, pastors and other leaders.

Dietzel was recognized during a staff meeting at LMS on Feb. 21. "I was often asked why I was taking ALI courses after 16 years of Mennonite education and 36 years as a teacher in a Mennonite school," said Dietzel. "I can answer that with three words: curiosity, integration and affirmation."

J. Richard Thomas, superintendent of Lancaster Mennonite School, said this program is a way that schools, colleges and MEA provide services to MSC schools to empower them as missional centers for Mennonite Church USA.

"Lancaster Mennonite School is pleased with the way the Anabaptist Learning Institute empowers our teachers to be Anabaptist educators who are valued by community," Thomas said. "These classes have been helpful to new teachers as well as experienced teachers, and all new teachers are now required to earn the Certified Anabaptist Educator designation or its equivalent."

Even with the knowledge of Anabaptist history and theology Dietzel had acquired, he had never undertaken a formal study of Anabaptism and wanted to know more. "My first class put together many of the pieces that I picked up along the way." Dietzel said the ALI courses not only taught him how faith can be integrated into teaching others but reinforced how faith is part of all aspects of life.

Correction: An April headline on page 44 incorrectly stated that Calvary Community Church was helping youth from Maranatha Christian Fellowship attend Pittsburgh 2011. Calvary helped Maranatha in 2009.

Daniel Dietzel (left) addresses the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School staff after be named the first certified Anabaptist educator. LMS superintendent Dick Thomas is at right.

"It's invaluable to learn from someone who has synthesized the concepts after much research—research that I don't have time to do."—*Rachel Nussbaum Eby*

Discover South America!

Paraguay - Peru

Iguazu Falls, Asuncion, Mennonite Colonies, Lima, Machu Picchu

September 23 – October 6, 2011

Contact Rudolf Duerksen at 1-204-415-6836
southway@shaw.ca
www.southwaytours.com

Same mission, brand new.

EMM

Going where the church is not ... yet.

Experience the new look and feel of
Eastern Mennonite Missions.
Learn more at **www.emm.org/newlogo.**

Eastern Mennonite Missions
717 898-2251 emm.org

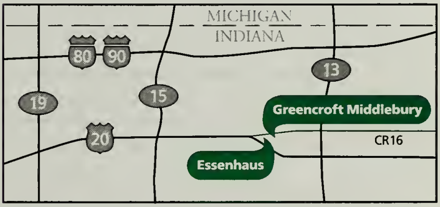
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
20
CR16
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

Why are gas prices so low?

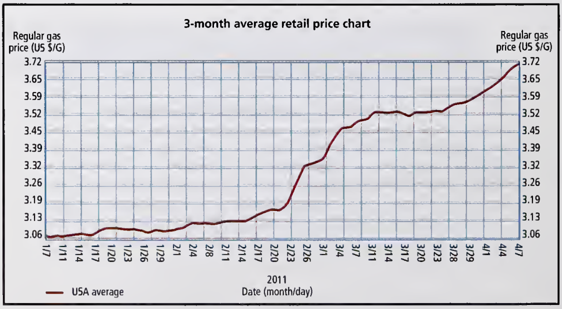
Gasoline and oil prices have spiked more than 20 percent since the recent onset of political and economic instability in North Africa and the Middle East. Major news outlets in this country frequently lead with the story of rising energy prices and its impact on Americans, many of whom complain about the high cost of gas while filling up their vehicles at the pump. Yet the price we pay in the United States to buy and burn gasoline is far lower than the true cost to society. This article focuses on explaining the true cost of gasoline (and fossil fuels in general) and ways that concerned individuals might choose to respond.

What are we paying for in a gallon of gas? According to government estimates about two-thirds of what the consumer pays at the pump is the cost of the crude oil. The remaining one-third is divided again roughly into thirds for refining, distribution (transportation and marketing) and taxes (state and federal). These estimates vary slightly by state and as prices change.

The cost consumers pay is considered by many to be a subsidized price, with the federal government providing tens of billions of dollars each year to oil and gas companies in the form of direct subsidies, tax breaks and royalty-free drilling. Still others point out the tremendous costs that the government and its military spend to protect oil interests around the world. While these costs are paid by taxpayers in another form, it helps skew the perception of the true cost of the gas we buy.

A different kind of cost that is overlooked, and remains unpaid by consumers in this country, is the cost of pollution emitted by burning gas and other hydrocarbon fuels. Local pollutants diminish the health of people who breathe air near to where the gas is burned, eventually causing health-care costs to rise. In addition, the science community has now documented the impact on the global environment from the accumulation of carbon dioxide (CO^2) and other gases in the atmosphere, much the result of human activity burning hydrocarbon fuels.

These environmental costs are borne by all global citizens in diminished health and adverse effects of global climate change—even those who gained nothing from the transport, warmth, electricity or profits enabled by the transaction. When consumers choose to burn gasoline, they diminish the environment for others—both near them and a world away—and they diminish the environment for humans, animals and plant species for the next 1,000 years and beyond.



While high CO^2 emissions from human activity on earth date back several generations, ours is the first to be fully confronted with overwhelming evidence and near-universal acknowledgement of global climate change from human behavior.

How do we respond, both as participants in this reality and as a people of faith?

The most drastic solution is to stop burning hydrocarbon fuels altogether. But as our economy and way of life rely on these inexpensive and still-abundant energy sources, a full moratorium would destroy life not only for many people today but possibly also for future generations through reduced investments and innovations and the political instability that would result from that level of social upheaval. Furthermore, we recognize that the earth's natural ecosystem can sustainably accommodate some level of CO^2 emissions from human activity, though agreement on what that level might be remains elusive. We are left, however, with the certainty that we must at least curtail CO^2 emissions, perhaps significantly, in order to sustain life.

Several options exist. Most economists advocate a system in markets called full-cost accounting, which determines prices not only in regard to explicit costs but also accounting for implicit and external costs. In the gasoline example, the external costs are those borne by third parties: those who bear the cost of the pollution. If we were to add these external costs to the price of gasoline now, the price would escalate dramatically, and consumers would respond by changing their behaviors. In the short run, we might make an extra effort to combine trips, carpool or even bike or walk instead of driving. In the longer run, drivers would shift to more fuel-efficient vehicles or modes of transportation—perhaps even deciding where to live on the basis of transportation needs.

The net result of higher gas prices is less consumption and fewer CO^2 emissions. Many countries of the world elect to apply full-cost accounting to hydrocarbon fuels as their way of responding to the global environmental crisis. According to CNN last month, Norwegians pay more than $9 per gallon even while they produce enough domestic oil to export some of it abroad.

Danes and Greeks currently pay more than $8 per gallon of gas, while the Irish, Germans and French pay more than $7.50. In each of these cases, the higher prices result in lower per capita consumption of gasoline than in the United States, where taxes remain low and have never been intended or sized to account for the cost of environmental externalities.

The most effective way to broadly address the problems of external costs associated with burning gas is to include all costs in the price of fuel, thereby assessing we consumers who buy and benefit from it the full cost of what our actions cause to society.

While advocating for full-cost accounting on fossil fuel energy is one noble response to this reality, the current voter and political climate in the United States makes the prospect of movement toward that objective challenging at best. However, when I think about my own consumption of gasoline in relation to my faith and what I believe Christ envisions for our behavior and its impact on others, I need to first minimize the CO^2 emitted on my behalf. I need to consume less fossil fuel energy, even when it means making personal sacrifices. When my activities "require" that I burn gasoline, maybe I should offer to pay for the full, true cost, even if no one else offers or is required to pay.

Many of the adverse effects today [of burning gasoline] are impacting people already living on the margin—those least able to "weather" the changes and least complicit in creating the crisis.

The voluntary gas tax movement emerged from this concern of paying for the full, true cost of burning gasoline while our society lags behind other high-income countries in applying it to all consumers. Individuals driven by faith—or even secular concern for humanity and the earth—have pooled together in small groups around the country to commit to paying a voluntary gas tax. Individuals decide for themselves how much to self-tax; some choose a set dollar value, while others employ a percentage formula. The proceeds of their tax are then dispersed to programs and projects that promote sustainability, avert further environmental degradation or restore ecosystems to natural balance. Individuals may also do this on their own, perhaps using gas-tax proceeds for more insulation in their attic or solar panels on their roof. Community groups may also form around this concern, with members participating in coalition with others, helping hold one another accountable and seeing greater impact from collective effort.

Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., where I am a member, offers a contemporary example of the voluntary gas tax in action. Efforts continue to inform church members of the global environmental crisis, including our individual actions and involvement, and to invite members to consider their own participation in the voluntary gas tax movement. The church has established a fund to receive gas tax proceeds. A committee at the church, the Creation Care Council, makes recommendations for expenditures from the fund. For example, gas tax proceeds were used to purchase nonmotorized reel lawn mowers to allow for lawn care that emits no CO^2 into the environment. As more proceeds are generated, the Creation Care Council will use these voluntary gas taxes to reduce water and electricity consumption and perhaps install equipment to generate renewable energy from the sun and wind. Perhaps even more important, when each participant pays more for the gasoline they buy, having added a self-tax, they will begin consuming less and alter behaviors and actions that begin a trend toward a more sustainable future.

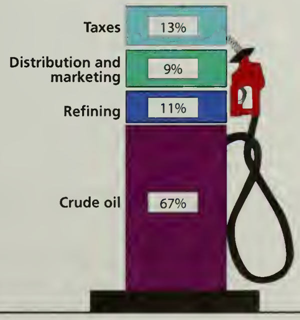
Burning gasoline emits carbon dioxide, which has environmental, economic and social costs that we are not being asked to pay. Rising sea levels are already swallowing up whole villages in low-lying areas, such as in Bangladesh, and many regions of sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing poor harvests as a result of changed weather patterns due to global climate change.

Many of the adverse effects today are impacting people already living on the margin—those least able to "weather" the changes and least complicit in creating the crisis. Americans burn the most gasoline per capita, and the accumulated emissions alter the global climate in ways that will have devastating impact on many people around world and life systems well into the future.

Responsive actions by individuals or together in groups make a difference. Each of us can ask how our faith informs our behaviors when our actions have impact on others.

The next time you fill up with gas, you might also ask, Why is the price so low?—*James M. Leaman, associate professor, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.*

What we pay for in a gallon of regular gasoline
(January 2011)
Retail price: $3.10/gallon



Spaulding dismissed from worship council

Position ended by MC USA due to covenanted relationship with another man.

Mennonite Church USA leaders dismissed Randall Spaulding from his position on the binational worship council on March 8. Spaulding was appointed to the council by Mennonite Church USA in 2009. Spaulding is the pastor of Covenant Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla. Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) appoint members to the binational worship council.

According to Terry Shue, director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA, the final decision made by MC USA leaders is an attempt to align with MC USA's position on sexuality as well as support Southeast Mennonite Conference, which revoked Spaulding's ministerial credential in September 2009. Spaulding has served as pastor of Covenant Mennonite Fellowship since 2003. The SMC leadership board cited Spaulding's disclosure of his desire to pursue a covenanted same-sex relationship as the reason for revocation of his ministerial credential.

"When his credentials were removed, it became problematic for people in that conference to see him on a national committee," said Shue on April 11.

On March 7, Terry Shue called Spaulding and asked him to step aside from his role on the binational worship council. Spaulding decided not to step down.

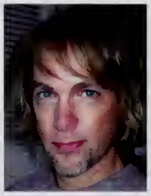
"Because of my passion for serving the church with my gifts and seeking justice for LGBT Mennonites, I respectfully said that I would not voluntarily step aside," said Spaulding in an interview on April 4.

On March 8, Spaulding received an e-mail from Shue on behalf of executive director Ervin Stutzman and other MC USA leaders, stating that his appointment on the council had come to an end, effective that day.

"It is with a heavy heart," the letter said, "and fully aware of the loss this represents to the church who has greatly benefited from your gifts in the past. ... Your competency in this role has never been in question, it is solely the fact of your ongoing relationship with another man that we find to be incompatible with serving in this role."

Shue said the decision came out of a longer process with Mennonite Publishing Network leaders and other leaders, as well as conversations with Spaulding.

Shue and Stutzman spoke to moderator-elect Dick Thomas, moderator Ed Diller and Marco Guete, conference minister of SMC, before asking Spaulding to step down. Spaulding said he was not included in the conversations among leaders about his position.



"No one on the council ever objected to my participation, and I was told that [Executive Board] leaders and MPN—at the time—gave their assent to my participation as long as I was not in a leadership role on the council," he said.

In a March 10 letter, Spaulding wrote to MC USA leaders. "Your recognition of my gifts and passion for serving the church ... is appreciated. Yet my integrity is questioned because I am in a loving, covenanted same-sex union blessed by God. While your action is not completely surprising, it remains hurtful and troubling."

In March, Spaulding announced his resignation as pastor of Covenant Mennonite Fellowship, effective July 24. He will move to Connecticut with his partner this fall and begin as a seminary student at Yale Divinity School.

The Covenant Mennonite Fellowship leadership council also sent a letter of response regarding Spaulding's dismissal to MC USA leaders on April 5. It read (in part), "We are very disappointed in the decision of Mennonite Church USA denominational leadership to remove Randy from the binational worship council."—*Anna Groff*

More Time With Family!

Photo: Larry Lehman Photography

"We decided there are better things to do in our retirement years than take care of a property. We love to come and go as we please and to have more time to spend with our family, volunteering and following other interests."

Charlie & Ruth Winters
New hybrid home residents

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Landis Homes

ACCREDITATION CONTINUING CARE COMMISSION

For a tour call Donna Shank at **717-581-3935**

1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz • **www.landishomes.org**

Digital edition coming

The Mennonite ends year in the black.

At its March 18-19 meeting in Goshen, Ind., The Mennonite, Inc., board received a proposal for adding a digital edition of the magazine *The Mennonite*, looked at finances and said goodbye to longtime board member Esther Vazquez of Dallas, Texas.

IPC/Walsworth, which prints *The Mennonite*, made a presentation to the board and staff of a digital edition of the magazine. This could be available to subscribers of the magazine and be accessed as soon as the magazine is printed. A digital edition would allow readers to see an electronic version of the magazine on a tablet or smartphone. Subscribers would receive the digital version sooner than the print version; it could replace their print copy, if they wish. A digital edition would also provide new opportunities for advertisers: They could embed videos or links to websites in their ads. The board asked the staff to explore doing a trial run after checking with advertisers.

In his report to the board, editor Everett Thomas said, "For the first time in 10-plus years at this work, it feels like we had a period of stability between board meetings: no redesign in the works, no staff changes and a new period of collaboration with the Executive Board staff."

In a year-end evaluation brought by the board's audit committee, treasurer Barth Hague of Newton, Kan., reported that The Mennonite, Inc., had a margin of $10,673 for the fiscal year ending on Jan. 31. He also presented an expense budget proposed by the board's executive committee. An expense budget for the current fiscal year of $474,300 was approved by the board, but Thomas noted a move of the Goshen office into the new building in Elkhart, Ind., would increase expenses. Another added expense in the budget reflects increases in paper prices.

While subscription numbers have stabilized, Thomas said, and advertising income was down last year, donations were strong. A slight reduction in staff time will also help reduce expenses in the current year, he said.

The board looked at an analysis of the magazine that used a content management grid adopted by the board in April 2009. The grid includes the four denominational goals and the convention theme. The board asked staff to use even more variables in analyzing content in *The Mennonite*.

Associate editor Anna Groff reported that the amount of reader feedback on the website and Facebook page has increased. Website traffic reached 14,218 absolutely unique visitors in January. *TMail* subscribers were at 2,871 as of Jan. 21, and *Meno Acontecer* at 724.

The board and staff celebrated Esther Vazquez' eight years of service on the board. She is a co-pastor of House of Healing Mennonite Church, Dallas.—*Gordon Houser*

AMBS
Take a seminary class
at the Pittsburgh convention

This summer, **AMBS will offer three for-credit classes** at the Mennonite Church USA gathering in Pittsburgh.

- **Principles of Youth Ministry** with Andy Brubacher Kaethler
- **13 Ways of looking at Zacchaeus: Luke's Quest Stories and Transformational Bible Study** with Mary H. Schertz
- **Church and Ministry: Pastoral Studies Distance Education Unit 1** (undergraduate-level) with Mike and Lois Shenk Zehr and David B. Miller

No previous seminary study required.
For details and registration, visit
www.ambs.edu/pittsburgh2011

Goshen College launches three institutes

Focus on ecological regeneration, Latino education and global Anabaptism

An "exciting new chapter" has begun at Goshen (Ind.) College, said president James E. Brenneman on March 24 as he launched three institutes, all focused on the college's distinctive academic strengths as they relate to faith: the Institute for Ecological Regeneration, the Institute for Latino Educational Achievement and the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism.

"Naming these distinctive programs as identifiable institutes will make explicit the quality of our academic work, and I believe these institutes will enhance our vision of becoming a truly interdisciplinary, integrative liberal arts college," Brenneman said.

The Institute for Ecological Regeneration, under the umbrella of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, "will be committed to bringing renewal and vitality to ecosystems through research and education," said Luke Gascho, executive director of Merry Lea and director of the institute. "Humankind is part of—not separate from—local, regional, national and global ecosystems. Humans have adversely impacted many natural systems—necessitating the call for transformative practices. The institute will study natural history, biotic and abiotic systems and the intersecting human dynamics. The institute will use the best investigative techniques and apply imagination to achieve an improved care and stewardship of creation. Principles of faith and shalom will guide the choice of actions to bring regeneration to ecological issues."

Naming these distinctive programs as identifiable institutes will make explicit the quality of our academic work—James Brenneman

The projects and programs of the institute will be designed on the integration of four core themes: land, community, faith and peace.

The current and planned programs of the institute include the agroecology summer intensive and a sustainability semester in residence for undergraduate students, a masters in environmental education, and conferences and symposia on topics of ecological stewardship. Undergraduate and graduate students will have direct involvement in the goals of the institute through various research projects.

The Institute for Latino Educational Achievement is the research arm of the Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning (CITL) at Goshen College. The research agenda of the institute is focused on factors that impact the academic success of Latino students in higher education settings, particularly in small liberal arts colleges in the Midwest.

"Findings from research will be used to improve educational practices at Goshen College that impact the academic success of Latino students," said Rebecca Hernandez, director for CITL and the institute. "Improving the educational success of Latino students is a relevant issue locally, regionally and globally. The Latino population continues to grow across the United States, and it is imperative that the factors leading to their academic achievement be both identified and put into practice in higher education institutions."

The current and planned research of the institute includes a three-part series titled "Latinos in Northern Indiana," research on faculty and students of color in the Council of Christian Colleges & Universities, and community, schools and families action research.

Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism is a program of the college's Mennonite Historical Library. MHL has one of the world's most comprehensive collections related to Anabaptist and Mennonite history. This institute will build on a rich tradition at Goshen College of Anabaptist-Mennonite studies, the unique on-campus resources of the Mennonite Church USA Archives and expertise of faculty.

In recent decades, the most dramatic growth in the Anabaptist-Mennonite family of faith, as in the Christian church more generally, has occurred in countries outside Europe and North America.

"From the perspective of five centuries of Anabaptist history, this is a phenomenal development that is transforming the character and future of the tradition," said John D. Roth, director of the Mennonite Historical Library, professor of history and director of the new Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism. "Mennonites in North America are vaguely aware of this transformation, but we have not been clear about the details of what is unfolding or about its larger significance and meaning."

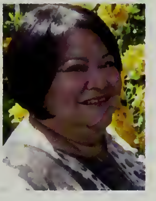
The institute will help nurture a new generation of scholarship and exchange explicitly oriented to the global Anabaptist church. The current and planned research of the institute includes the Global Anabaptist Wikipedia, a Global Anabaptist History publication series and participation in the Multi-Nation Anabaptist Profile. The current and planned programs of the institute includes regular conferences, international partnerships with Anabaptist study centers, visiting scholars and church leaders and hosting of global church partners.—*Jodi H. Beyeler of Goshen College*

Director of transformative peacemaking named

New position created in response to request from Iglesia Menonita Hispana

Mennonite Church USA Executive Director Ervin Stutzman is creating a new cabinet-level position to focus on immigration issues and antiracism work. On May 15, Iris de León-Hartshorn will begin as half-time director for transformative peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA. By Sept. 1, the position will be full-time.

"The idea for this position was born out of conversation with Iglesia Menonita Hispana during the discernment process about whether to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix as planned despite Arizona's new immigration law," says Stutzman. "In a December 2010 letter to the Executive Board, [IMH] requested that Mennonite Church USA 'take the lead on immigration and not defer it to other church organizations or entities that may be working in this area already.' After several conversations with representatives of IMH, we agreed upon a job description and several candidates for the role."


De León Hartshorn

Responsibilities of the new position include these:

- leading the church in its commitment to justice and fairness for immigrants, within Mennonite Church USA and in social advocacy to outside groups;
- strengthening relationships, services and communication with Spanish-speaking constituents of Mennonite Church USA, especially in Latino congregations;
- developing connections and partnerships with agencies and other parts of the church that deal with immigrant concerns;
- providing antiracism training across the church for organizational staff, boards and congregations;
- working closely with the director of intercultural relations to audit regularly the churchwide system of agencies, area conferences, institutions and related groups for the inclusion of racial/ethnic leaders and for the availability of churchwide materials from a racial/ethnic perspective.

Since 2009, de León-Hartshorn has been executive conference minister for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC) in Portland, Ore. "I like what I'm doing," she says, "but felt compelled to consider the call."

As a Latina experienced in working with Mennonite institutions, de León-Hartshorn says she recognized this new position as an opportunity to use her gifts and skills. She holds a master's degree from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and was ordained in September 1994 by Western District Conference and South Central Conference while serving as a chaplain with Northwest Hospice in Humble, Texas.

De León-Hartshorn was part of a volunteer antiracism team for Western District Conference in the mid-1990s and later became a trainer for Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process.

She also served as co-pastor of Houston Mennonite Church with her spouse, Leo Hartshorn, before accepting the position of director of peace and justice ministries with MCC U.S. in Akron, Pa., in September 1996, which she held until 2007. She worked on issues related to immigration, women's concerns, peace advocacy and antiracism.

From 2007 to 2009, she worked with Mennonite Church USA as director for intercultural relations, then moved from Lancaster, Pa., to Portland in August 2009, following a call to serve PNMC.

De León-Hartshorn says she recognizes that this new role will be a challenge. "I like challenges, though," she says.

"When dealing with complex issues, what does it mean for us to embrace shalom? As we answer that question, we are moving toward transformation.

"Shalom is about right relationships but not just on an interpersonal level. A person cannot be your equal if he or she is being oppressed in a system that's unjust," she says. "Our story of salvation, as followers of Christ, is a story of shalom. Being missional is about joining this story of reconciliation in a broken world."

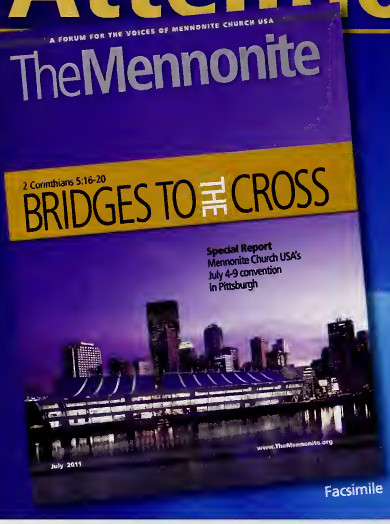
Stutzman sees de León-Hartshorn's understanding of shalom as "much needed, especially as we consider the strong anti-immigration feelings in our country." He says he is grateful for her willingness to take on this new role.

"Iris is a deeply committed Christian with strong organizational and leadership gifts," he says. "She has a gentle spirit to accompany her strong passion for peace and justice, giving her the ability to build bridges between disparate groups. This quality is enhanced by her ability to laugh at herself and not take herself too seriously. She functions well as a team player, as she demonstrated in a previous term of leadership with Mennonite Church USA."

De León-Hartshorn will remain located in Portland, Ore. This was an important condition of her acceptance of the position.

"There are different experiences of being Mennonite around the country," she says. "Many young people are being drawn to urban settings, and in the Pacific Northwest there are a variety of expressions of church—an intentional community, a congregation of a homeless community and churches of different ethnicities."—*Joanna Shenk for Mennonite Church USA*

Attention pastors



Facsimile

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* **Pittsburgh 2011** issue available

Everyone in your congregation can read about the happenings at **Pittsburgh 2011** even if they don't receive *The Mennonite.*

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at **800-790-2498** or **Subscriptions@themennonite.org** to place your order. We will send your order in bulk at $2 per copy ($3 Cnd). Your order and payment **must be received by July 15.** No invoice will be issued at this low price. Send payment to *The Mennonite,* 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

TheMennonite

RESOURCES

From Nonresistance to Justice: The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908–2008 by Ervin Stutzman (Herald Press, 2011, $39.99) shows how the church moved from an emphasis on nonresistance and nonconformity to engage in advocacy for peace and justice. It also presses for a greater emphasis on the way God's activity must guide our work in the world, arguing for a stronger link between God's grace, justice and peace.

Worship and Mission After Christendom by Alan Kreider and Eleanor Kreider (Herald Press, 2011, $19.99) draws upon missiology, liturgiology, bliblical studies, church history and the vast experience of today's global Christian church to provide a guide for people who take seriously God's call to be the church in a world where institutional religion is no longer taken for granted.

To Buy a Field: Unearthing Spiritual Treasure by Barbara Esch Shisler (WestBow Press, 2010, $9.95) is a collection of 12 essays that take a sharp look at ordinary experience through the lens of Christian spirituality.

Who Are the Christians in the Middle East by Betty Jean Bailey and J. Martin Bailey (Eerdmans, 2010, $20) chronicles the history and current state of the various Christian communities in the Middle East. This second edition updates the 2003 volume to provide data on churches, church leaders and contacts.

Nature and Altering It by Allen Verhey (Eerdmans, 2010, $15) identifies and describes the significant cultural "myths" or "narratives" that have shaped Western perspectives on nature and altering it and shows why we need to bring a fresh Christian voice to today's ecological debate.

Receiving David: The Gift of a Son Who Taught Us How to Live and Love by Faye Knol (Eerdmans, 2010, $15) shares the lessons about love, the value of life and the beauty of relationships that David, who was born dangerously premature and wasn't expected to live, taught those around him during his 22 years of life.

Greenhouses of Hope: Congregations Growing Young Leaders Who Will Change the World, edited by Dori Grinenko Baker (Alban Institute, 2011, $18), includes essays by seven writers who find evidence of young people who want to be in church and have discovered there "a purpose that can make their lives sing."

Things We Have Known: Through the 20th Century with AJ and Alta Metzler, edited by Alice Metzler Roth (Authorhouse, 2010), is a memoir of Mennonite Church leaders AJ (1902-1996) and Alta (1905-2000) Metzler. Order from www.authorhouse.com.

CALENDAR

Big Valley Bike and Hike, May 7, 9 a.m.; at the **Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa**. There are no entrance fees, but donations will be accepted which will benefit Mennonite Central Committee, a worldwide relief agency. Download the Sponsor Form in html or PDF for the Annual Bike/Hike from TriStateReliefSale.org. For more information, contact Alan or Nancy Kauffman at 717-935-9965 or Maple Grove Mennonite Church at 717-935-2513 or by e-mail at ank@pa.net.

The ***Annual Black Swamp Benefit*** will be held at the Fulton County (Ohio) Fairgrounds June 17-18. Proceeds from the benefit will support **Sunshine Inc., of Northwest Ohio** and also assist with international disaster relief efforts through **MCC**. The main auction features beautiful, handcrafted quilts and wall hangings in a wide variety of sizes and colors, handmade wood furniture and accessories, antiques and other merchandise. Visitors to the Benefit will also enjoy more than 20 food booths, an extensive craft area, handcrafts from world artisans at the Ten Thousand Villages shop, a huge children's activity area and children's toy auction, a silent auction and much more. For those interested in previewing the auction items please visit our new website at www.blackswampbenefit.org.

WORKERS

Dula, Michelle Witmer, began a term as associate pastor of congregational life at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa., on Feb. 20.

Hollowell, Hugh, was licensed in special ministries as director of Love Wins Ministries, Raleigh, N.C., on March 19.

Kabamba, Louis, was licensed as associate pastor at French Church for Revival, Mount Joy, Pa., on Feb. 27.

Lopez, Pedro, was ordained as lead pastor at Iglesia Menonita Ebenezer, Lebanon, Pa., on March 12.

Nzey, Jean Bruno, was licensed as lead pastor at French Church for Revival, Mount Joy, Pa., on Feb. 27.

Okanya, Nelson, was ordained as lead pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship, Lanham, Md., on March 27.

OBITUARIES

Alderfer, Joan Landis, 70, Archbold, Ohio, died March 18. Parents: Marvin K. and Mary Hagey Landis. Children: Todd, Mindy Graber, Mary Beth Beck; nine grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Alderfer, Verna M. Delp, 98, Harleysville, Pa., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Norman M. Alderfer. Parents: Warren and Fannie Moyer Delp. Children: Mildred Alderfer. Funeral: March 3 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Arborgast, Elsa Yoder, 98, Harrisonburg, Va., died April 2. Spouse: Olie M. Arborgast (deceased). Parents: Levi and Ella Hershberger Yoder. Foster son: David Thompson; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Basbagill, Kathleen Iona Rohrer, 61, Louisville, Ohio, died Feb. 26 of cancer. Spouse: Frederick T. Basbagill. Parents: Maynard C. and Awilda G. Miller Rohrer. Children: Michelle Lehman, Stephen Whitley; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Stier-Israel Funeral Home, Louisville.

Benner, Stanley Longacre, 65, Cambridge, Ontario, died March 7 of non-hodgkin's lymphoma. Spouse: Margaret Janzen Benner. Parents: Paul Yoder and Margaret May Longacre Benner. Child: Nathan. Funeral: March 13 at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario.

Bishop, Lloyd, 84, Perkasie, Pa., died March 27. Spouse: Marie Shelly Bishop. Parents: Leon and Lizzie Loux Bishop. Children: Diane Hunsberger, Marjorie Brenneman, Darrell, Lori Bishop; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 31 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Driver, Ethel May, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Fred A. Driver (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Lula Kohne May. Children: Lewis R., James L., Grace E. Birchfield; two grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Farney, Perry L., 83, Lowville, N.Y., died March 5. Spouse: Pearl Lehman Hirschey Farney. Spouse: Shirley Zehr Farney (deceased). Parents: Philip and Minnie Virkler Farney. Children: John C. Farney, Denise M. Bowen; four grandsons. Step-children: Jeffrey R. Hirschey, Trinda Bishop, Suzanne Jenack; seven step-grandchildren; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.

Franzen, Melvin, 85, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Mildred Jean Schmidt Franzen. Parents: John J. and Kornelia Klassen Franzen. Children: LaVerle, Teresa Kennedy, Doyle; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Marion County, Kan.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Gingerich, Cleo "Butch" V., 82, Kalona, Iowa, died March 20. Spouse: Dorothy Swartzendruber Gingerich. Parents: Cornelius and Ruhama Yoder Gingerich. Children: Marsha Diener, Vaughn. Funeral: March 23 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Gingerich, Esther Elizabeth Zimmerman, 96, Lowville, N.Y., died April 7. Spouse: Andrew Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Christian and Cora Allison Zimmerman. Children: Lois Bast, Willard, Hubert, David; 11 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 11 at Croghan Mennonite Church, Croghan, N.Y.

Goertz, Ernest Arnold, 88, Goessel, Kan., died Feb. 18. Spouse: Elma Ruby Goertzen Goertz. Parents: Henry F. and Martha Schmidt Goertz. Children: Ruth Reislet, Emily Goertz, Dorothy Goertz Bernstein, Joel, Esther Epp, Naomi Goertz Ingram, Henry, Mary Goertz; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Marion County, Kan.

Goerzen, Wendy Jean Harms, 49, Newton, Kan., died March 21. Spouse: Bryan Goerzen. Parents: Clayton Lee and Virginia Rose Williamson Harms. Children: Brittany Goerzen, Sheldon Goerzen, Hayden Goerzen. Funeral: March 26 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Marion County, Kan.

Graber, Betty Lou Brown, 75, Goshen, Ind., died March 28. Spouse: Calvin C. Graber. Parents: Henry and Anna Blosser Brown. Child: Jonathan; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Heintz, Eileen Roberta Eigsti, 93, Sarasota, Fla., died March 17. Spouse: Henry Heintz (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Anna Zerlein Eigsti. Step-son: Glen Heintz. Funeral: March 23 at Sunnyside Chapel, Sarasota, Fla., and March 26 in Graymont, Ill.

Hershey, Ruth R. Zimmerman, 96, Lititz, Pa., died March 13. Spouse: M. Roher Hershey (deceased). Parents: Moses and Amanda Rutt Zimmerman. Children: Donald L., Kathryn M. Yost, James, Ruth Eileen Hershey; nine grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at Landis Valley Christian Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa.

Hooley, Anna Grace Miller, 89, Goshen, Ind., died March 18. Spouse: Ernest F. Hooley (deceased). Parents: Percy and Artie Yoder Miller. Children: Rita Lewis, Cecelia Wyse, Brenda Nebel, Delmar, Eric, Marsha Hooley-Miller; 17 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: March 22 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Huber, Phares K., 74, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 15 following a lengthy illness. Spouse: Emma J. Lehman Huber. Parents: Phares M. and Lena Kurtz Huber. Children: Nelson L., Leon L., Phares L., David L., Gary L., James L., Dale L., Marian L.; 19 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Kriebel, Elsie M. Freed, 91, Lansdale, Pa., died March 18. Spouse: Paul R. Kriebel (deceased). Spouse: Sylvanus and Maggie Freed. Children: Paul, Donna Godshall, Tom, Nancy Pendleton, Steven Rene Casey, Larry, Donald, Terry; 23 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 25 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale.

Loewen, Alfred, 96, Altona, Manitoba, died March 7. Spouse: Anne Friesen Loewen (deceased). Parents: David and Susana Rempel Loewen. Children: Gerald, Ken, Margaret Reimer, Karen Guenther; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Miller, M. Dwight, 84, Goshen, Ind., died March 24 following an extended illness. Spouse: Rachel M. Keim Miller. Parents: Milferd and Florence Kauffman Miller. Children: David, Karen Higgenbotham, Kathy White, Curtis; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 29 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Moon, Ivan D., 93, Scottdale, Pa., died March 7. Spouse: Naomi G. Graybill Moon (deceased). Parents: Bert H. and Maude E. Moon. Children: Rachel A. Kutcher, Daniel E., Lois N. Mannhardt, Elisabeth E. Crofutt; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 7 at Salem Mennonite Church, Scottdale.

Peachey, Lois Romaine Hostetler, 91, Belleville, Pa., died March 11 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: LeRoy Leonard Peachey (deceased). Parents: Jefferson D. and Maude Harshbarger Hostetler. Children: Shirley Roth, Dwight, Dean, Gayle Shank; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 14 at Barrville Mennonite Church, Reedsville, Pa.

Rice, Howard G., 84, Perkasie, Pa., died March 6. Spouse: Anna Miller Rice. Parents: Erwin and Sallie Gehman Rice. Children: Dennis, Daryl, Timothy, Sharon Rice, John, Philip, Larry, Garry; nine grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie.

Rosenberger, Brandy Rose Cralley, 32, Souderton, Pa., died March 10. Spouse: Andrew Rosenberger. Parents: Gary Lee and JoAnn Mary Rebstock Cralley. Children: Evelyn Mary Rosenberger, Naomi Claire Rosenberger. Funeral: March 17 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Rutt, Lucy M. Musser, 92, Ephrata, Pa., died March 10. Spouse: Elmer N. Rutt (deceased). Parents: Noah and Susan Weber Musser. Children: Geraldine Horst, Beulah Martin, Norma Wiegand, Joyce Rutt; five grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: March 16 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Schrock, Jonas J.D., 82, Goshen, Ind., died March 18. Spouse: Mary Cross Schrock. Parents: Joe J. and Lizzie Plank Schrock. Children: Maxine J. Kurt, Virginia J. Forgey, Kerm G., Ken G., Karl G.; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Selzer, Merle Ervin, 81, Hesston, Kan., died March 22. Spouse: Lois Nitzsche Selzer. Parents: Edward and Lorena Neuschwanger Selzer. Children: Robert, Kenneth, Karen Hankins, Becky Mislo, Douglas, Ervin "Jim," Donald; 15 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Canton, Kan.

Shank, Sybil Marian Koger, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 14. Spouse: Joseph Shank. Parents: Lee Henry and Hattie Cumbie Koger. Children: Arneda Steiner, J.G., Ferm Miller, Evelyn Mast, Nelson, Charles; 19 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Shenk, Evelyn Ruth Landis, 82, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 20 of complication of Lewy Body Dementia. Spouse: John M. Shenk. Parents: Abram Paul and Eva Domer Grim Landis. Children: Gloria Kniss, Jonathan, James, Joseph; four grandchildren. Celebration-of-Life Service: Jan. 24 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community Strite Auditorium, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jan. 25 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.Stahly,

Pauline L. Weldy, 93, Wakarusa, Ind., died March 2. Spouse: H. LaMar Stahly (deceased). Parents: C.S. and Golda Wenger Weldy. Children: Terry, Dennis, Bruce, Steve, Kirby; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 8 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Stuckey, Rutheda M. Grieser, 87, Archbold, Ohio, died March 12. Spouse: Loren Stuckey. Parents: Albert and Priscilla Vonier Grieser. Children: Dean, Al, Glenda Nofziger, Phil, Andrew, Gary; 20 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stucky, Ransom Roy, 87, Moundridge, Kan., died March 14. Spouse: Mary Kathryn Yoder Stucky. Parents: John E. and Katie E. Friesen Stucky. Children: Diana R. Graber, Clinton D., Brian D., Annette K. Epp, Janice L. Hershberger; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at First Mennonite of Christian, Moundridge.

Swanson, Letha M. Harter, 86, Wakarusa, Ind., died March 3. Spouse: Donald J. Swanson (deceased). Spouse: Dale J. Nafziger (deceased). Parents: Earl and Bertha Weldy Harter. Children: Larry Nafziger, Joyce Nafziger Coffey, Karen Nafziger Donaldson, Donald Swanson, Karen Swanson; six grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Troyer, Raymond, C., 95, Goshen, Ind., died March 2. Spouse: Martha Wenger Troyer (deceased). Parents: Calvin J. and Matilda Lambright Troyer. Children: JoAnn Garber, Emmet, Richard, Franklin, Jerry, Warren; 18 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

White, Elsie Irene, 93, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 7. Parents: Elmer and Sadie Byler White. Funeral: March 19 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Yoder, Marjorie M. Yoder, 89, Wellman, Iowa, died March 9. Spouse: Floyd Yoder (deceased). Parents: Marion and Bertha Swartzendruber Yoder. Children: Leland, Galen, Curtis, Calvin, Rhonda Yoder Graber, Kevin; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Orpha B. Schauf, 91, Wellman, Iowa, died March 14. Spouse: Raymond H. Yoder (deceased). Spouse: Ralph H. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Edward and Roseanna Kelley Schauf. Children: Roseanna Yoder, Becki Miller, Robert L.; one grandchild. Funeral: March 17 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Herald Press

Teaching That Transforms
Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters

Why send your child to a Christian school? Isn't any school good enough? John D. Roth says no; in a readable fashion, he frames key questions regarding the future of Christian education and makes the case for Christian schools, offering clear directions while inviting dialogue and alternative perspectives. Along the way, he provides a theological foundation for education from a distinctly Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective.

"This book will make you want to be a lifelong learner and a better Christian, teacher, parent, and student. An excellent book for faculty retreats, Sunday school classes, and classes in Anabaptist history and education. Let the conversations begin!"
—Shirley Hershey Showalter, former president of Goshen College

$12.99 USD/$14.99 CAD
www.mpn.net/teachingthat-transforms

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for a ***full-time news bureau director***. The director is responsible for positioning EMU effectively with local, national and church-related media, building awareness about EMU through social and traditional media, serving as an integral member of the marketing/communications team to manage information flow and brand identity for the university. Bachelor's degree is minimal qualification. At least two years of working with news copy is required. Demonstrated experience and enthusiasm for social media is required. Knowledge of EMU, Mennonite Church USA and/or Anabaptism is strongly preferred. Passion for EMU vision, mission and core values is essential. Basic digital photography skills are desirable. Full-time. Accepting applications until May 1, 2011. The beginning date is June 22, 2011. Please submit resumé, completed EMU application and writing samples (one news and one feature) and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our website at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Award Winning

TWO-CYLINDER®

MAGAZINE

The Finest Publication Covering Vintage John Deere Tractors & Equipment

Membership in the Two-Cylinder Club® includes the bi-monthly magazine (each issue contains a quality product and service section, along with member-submitted Classified Ads); convenient no-charge access to our team of technical experts; discounts on books, DVDs, and other products; and the opportunity to obtain exclusive services such as Tractor Build Records.

We invite members of the Mennonite Community to join the many thousands of people from around the globe who are already members of the Two-Cylinder Club. Please visit **www.two-cylinder.com** for more information.

Membership is $34.95 per year.

Two-Cylinder • PO Box 430 • Grundy Center, IA 50638

Personal checks, money orders, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, and PayPal

Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA seeks ***two half-time regional pastors***. Assignments begin June 1, 2011. Job description and responsibilities: working collaboratively with a team of conference pastors and volunteers, the regional pastor will engage in regular pastor/peer meetings, assist congregational search committees, meet periodically with the pastor(s) of the local congregation and link pastors and congregations with resources. Qualifications: A minimum of five years pastoral experience within Mennonite Church USA is required. Preference will be given to people with a seminary degree or reasonable equivalent. The successful candidate will have strong communication skills, excellent relational skills, be a perceptive listener and be a demonstrated leader with the ability to articulate conference positions with enthusiasm and passion. Candidate must be committed to Anabaptism as expressed in the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and have a vibrant personal faith. Salary/benefits: The half-time assignment (2.5 days/week) salary will be based on denominational guidelines with proportional health-care benefits, vacation and sick days. Check the conference website (www.ohiomennoniteconference.org) for the complete job description and expectations. Applications: Ministerial Leadership Information forms should be submitted to Tom Kauffman at ohconfmin@gmail.com, or sent to PO Box 140065, Toledo OH 43614. Applications accepted through May 15, 2011, or until the position is filled.

Core market manager

Everence (formerly MMA) is seeking a core market manager to provide leadership of all Everence activities within the Newton, Kan., area market. Responsible for developing the market so individuals and organizations have the opportunity to integrate their faith with their financial decisions. Qualified candidates will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience (MBA preferred); proven management experience, preferably in delivery of financial services; proven negotiation skills; and significant sales and distribution experience.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; e-mail: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

S	I	E	P	H	E	N		H	O	S	E	A
A		Z			L			A		A		H
M	A	R	Y		I	R	O	N		R	E	I
S		A			J			N		A		M
O			S	H	A	D	R	A	C	H		E
N	O	A	H		H			H				L
	L		E			A			L	U	K	E
A	D	A	M		A	M				R		C
B		C				O	B	A	D	I	A	H
R	A	H	A	B		S		D		A		
A		I		O			J	O	S	H	U	A
H		S	I	A	R			R				B
A		H	E	Z	E	K	I	A	H			E
M			N		D			M		G	A	D

Join us for **Salem Mennonite Church's *125th anniversary celebration***, June 18-19, 2011, in Kidron, Ohio. This will be a time of reflection and celebration of "God at Work" through the Anabaptist family. Come hear from former pastors and musicians, view displays, sing, worship and fellowship. See our website (www.salemmennonite.us) for a detailed schedule of events after June 1. For questions or additional information contact the church at email address: salemkidron@salemmennonite.us.

Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) is seeking ***nursing faculty*** for Fall 2011 to join their team. Candidates should have expertise in medical-surgical nursing, mental health nursing and gerontological nursing as well as experience as a student or faculty member in an online teaching environment. Starting date: August 2011. Review of applications will begin on April 22 and continue until positions are filled. See the complete position announcement at http://www.bethelks.edu/bc/careers/openings.php. EOE/AA

The newly launched **Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship** (www.mennhealth.org) seeks an innovative ***executive director*** to guide the development of a broadly interdisciplinary association of Anabaptist health-care professionals. The organization will seek to integrate faith and practice through service, advocacy and education. For more information, contact Phyllis Miller, MHF steering committee chair, at pmiller@bethelks.edu.

Director of Programs**: Mennonite Central Committee U.S.** MCC, a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. The Director of Programs (MCC U.S.) works jointly with the Director of Programs (MCC Canada) to manage all aspects of MCC international programs. Each will supervise some combination of international area directors and heads of resourcing departments. The Director of Programs also manages U.S. domestic programs or supervises a director/coordinator for U.S. domestic programs. The Director of Programs reports to the MCC U.S. Executive Director and is part of the MCC U.S. Management Team. The Director of Programs ensures that relevant stakeholders are appropriately included to position MCC to remain true to its ministry and accomplish its goals. The Director of Programs will ensure that adequate measurable outcomes are achieved according to a strategic plan for international program approved by both the MCC U.S. and MCC Canada boards and according to a strategic plan for U.S. domestic program approved by the MCC U.S. board. Key qualifications include master's degree in social science or related field with a concentration in international development or peacebuilding preferred; knowledge of current issues in the field of disaster relief, sustainable community development, justice and peacebuilding; experience in international development including proficiency in program planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; management experience with a demonstrated ability to lead a team, build consensus within a team, empower staff and move agenda forward, strong relational, verbal and written communication and diplomatic skills in group leadership within an organization as well as within its constituent groups, partner organizations and other agencies. See complete job description at (http://mcc.org/serve/positions/director-programs-mcc-us). All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Position based in Akron, Pa. MCC is committed to employment equity and values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply. Submit letter of intent and resumé by May 31, 2011, to Prem Dick, Personnel Placement Coordinator (psd@mcc.org), Human Resources, Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501.

Save the date: First Mennonite Church of San Francisco is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a special celebration weekend Oct. 22-23, 2011. To be put on the mailing list for future details, please e-mail Minka van der Zwaag at fmcsfanniversary@gmail.com.

Peter Epp teaches Mennonite studies in Gretna, Manitoba, and is a member of Young Adult Fellowship.

Conflicts without violence

What's the difference between a fight and a conflict? It's a question we as a people actively seeking Christ's peace should probably be asking ourselves more often.

If you want to take the easy way out, you may tell me a fight includes violence. That seems right. But what is violence? Is it just physical? In an age of attack ads and cyber-bullying, we all know how much violence we can do to one another without even standing in the same room. So with all this nuance, how do we make sure that we're dealing with our conflicts—the ones without violence—in a way that doesn't make them into fights—the ones with violence?

I have learned about a marriage study that has helped me answer this question. As I recall, the study followed married couples and looked for characteristics that showed up repeatedly in successful marriages but showed up rarely, if ever, in unsuccessful ones. One characteristic that showed up again and again in the conflicts of successful marriages was this: Both partners were able to affirm their commitment to each other and to affirm the value of their partner while arguing. I've been married for less than four years, but I already know that it would be setting the bar high to expect us to make a These-are-my-favorite-things-about-you list every time we're frustrated with one another. But I do think we need to affirm our commitment to each other often and acknowledge that to do the opposite—to disagree in a way that takes our unconditional commitment to each other off the table—is to argue violently.

> In the conflicts of successful marriages, both partners were able to affirm their commitment to each other and to affirm the value of their partner while arguing.

Does this mean I believe that anyone who leaves or asks a partner to leave under any circumstances is doing violence? Certainly not. When one partner continuously resorts to violence to undermine the humanity of the other, leaving may be the only way to stop the violence. In fact, in one of the rare moments where Jesus speaks specifically and directly to a particular issue, he reminds us of this. Sometimes we have to stop ourselves during a conflict and gauge this. But we need to do so honestly and sincerely because it's all too easy to let ourselves off the hook by deciding the other person "deserves" a threat.

That said, if we decide something is up for discussion, then we need to discuss it without violence. We need to disarm before the conflict by agreeing that we will refuse to use threats of leaving or asking the other party to leave. We must refuse to withhold any part of the other person's full say in the relationship while we discuss. It will be tempting to use threats to get the upper hand as the argument gets harder or if we feel that what's at stake is particularly important, but we need to honor our partner, the process and, most importantly, Christ's call to nonviolence by staying true to our commitment.

As I look at Mennonite history and at the Mennonite church today, I find myself wondering what this marriage researcher would find if he or she were following us and taking notes. In the midst of a conflict, how often have we reaffirmed our commitment to one another in spite of the conflict? How often have we agreed that something deserves an open conversation but then threatened to leave, quit or revoke someone else's involvement?

This researcher likely would find that our track record isn't promising. Our history is full of schism, caused by discussions where unconditional commitment was taken off the table as things got heated.

The questions we've taken too long to ask then are these: Do we continue to perpetuate our flawed historical model of church fighting? Or are we boldly breaking this cycle to move our covenanted faith community to deeper, more peaceful commitment—the kind that honors all conflicting partners without the violence of punishment or abandonment?

Despite our fights, we are fortunate to still have our church today, and this makes us fortunate enough to still have time to turn our fights into committed conflicts. We'd do well to ask ourselves: What conflicts have we agreed we will openly dialogue on? And how then should we make sure those are faithful discussions and not just fights?

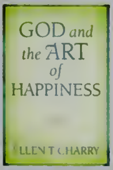
FILM REVIEW

The Company Men (R) centers on a year in the life of three men trying to survive a round of corporate downsizing at a major company and how that affects them, their families and their communities. While the film takes appropriate potshots at CEOs making millions in bonusing while downsizing their workforce, it concentrates on the psychological and everyday details of the people affected by sudden unemployment. —*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS

Good News
for Anxious
Christians
10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do
Phillip Cary

Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do by Phillip Cary (Brazos Press, 2010, $14.99) brings some common sense to teaching about the Christian life. Cary wants Christians to "rely on the gospel rather than put our trust in a bunch of supposedly 'practical' ideas that are actually doing us harm." Cary addresses an evangelical subculture that may or may not fit Mennonites. While his tone can feel chiding, his directions are generally balanced, e.g., "It's a *both/and* proposition—both God's doing and ours, both his gift and our work. For God is our Creator, and his gift becomes our very being."—*gh*



God and the Art of Happiness by Ellen T. Charry (Eerdmans, 2010, $35) looks at the treatment of God and happiness in ancient Greek philosophy, Christian thought and in the Bible. She shows how the Bible encourages the happiness and flourishing that accompany obedience to the Creator. Happiness, she argues, is not just some future, eschatological reality but is to be enjoyed in the present. She writes that "reverent devotion to the creator and redeemer of the world is the happy life, for it crafts one into an instrument of divine wisdom, love and goodness."—*gh*

Beware of Big Brother and bias

Conversation around issues in our culture becomes more difficult when certain parties act like Orwell's Big Brother or when media outlets let bias affect their reporting.

Big Brother: William Cronon, a historian who teaches at the University of Wisconsin, published an opinion piece in *The New York Times* suggesting that Wisconsin's Republican governor has turned his back on the state's long tradition of "neighborliness, decency and mutual respect."

The G.O.P.'s response, writes Paul Krugman in his March 27 *Times* column, was to demand copies of all e-mails sent to or from Cronon's university mail account containing any of a wide range of terms, including the word "Republican" and the names of a number of Republican politicians.

Krugman compares this to the ongoing smear campaign against climate science and climate scientists.

Back in 2009, he writes, "climate skeptics got hold of more than 1,000 e-mails between researchers at the Climate Research Unit at Britain's University of East Anglia. Nothing in the correspondence suggested any kind of scientific impropriety."

The skeptics called it "Climategate," Krugman writes, but "much of the smear has focused on just one e-mail, in which a researcher talks about using a 'trick' to 'hide the decline' in a particular series. In context, it's clear that he's talking about making an effective graphical presentation, not about suppressing evidence."

In such smear campaigns, the substance of a person's argument is ignored in order to discredit him or her. And while asking for e-mail records is not illegal, it can have a chilling effect on academic researchers, which is likely the point.

What's at stake, Krugman writes, "is whether we're going to have an open national discourse in which scholars feel free to go wherever the evidence takes them and to contribute to public understanding." Unfortunately, some powerful groups don't want an open conversation.

Bias: While all reporting includes an element of bias, when it is widespread and reflects the agenda of a certain party, it needs to be called to task.

In the March/April issue of *Columbia Journalism Review*, Karen Rothmyer does just that in regard to Africa.

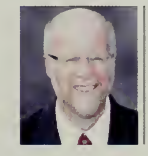
She mentions good news out of Africa: "Poverty rates throughout the continent have been falling steadily and much faster than previously thought. … The death rate of children under 5 years of age is dropping. … Africa is among the world's most rapidly growing economic regions."

However, she writes, "U.S. journalism continues to portray a continent of unending horrors," and she provides some examples.

What's behind this bias? Rothmyer believes that the main reason for such negative stereotypes may well be "the influence of Western-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international aid groups like United Nations agencies." She says she understands that these organizations "tend to focus not on what has been accomplished but on convincing people how much remains to be done." And they need funds in order to operate.

Africans concede that terrible conflict and human suffering continue on the continent. "But what's lacking, say media observers … is context and breadth of coverage so that outsiders can see the continent as a whole," Rothmyer writes.

Any good communication requires openness and context. We need to apply that to our own consumption of news. TM



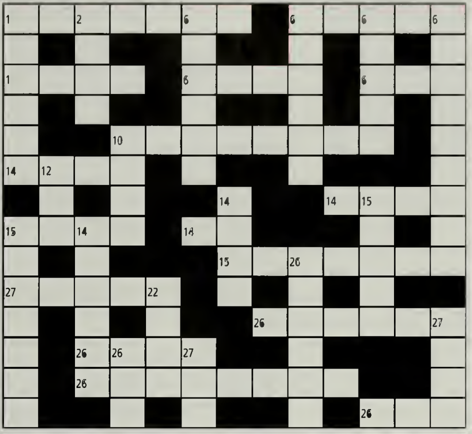
Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Clara Bartel, Hydro, Okla.
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Verda Good, Eureka, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Bonnie Handrich Venhuizen, Isle, Minn.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Ernie & Lois Hess, Lancaster, Pa.
Rachel Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Joyce Hofer, Freeman, S.D.
Marian Hollinger, New Holland, Pa.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Stan Hostetter, Richfield, Ohio
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Irene Kentfield, Harleysville, Pa.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Eldon King, Dalton, Ohio
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Nelson Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Richard & Shirley Mast, Graham, N.Y.
Duane Miller, Harrisonburg, Va.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Miller, Lakewood, Colo.
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Helen Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Carl & Ella Peters, Henderson, Neb.
Howard Piggee, Fredericksburg, Va.
Ann Regier, Madrid, Neb.
Mary Rhoade, Goshen, Ind.
Shirley Ries, Freeman, S.D.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Esther Sauder, Wauseon, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Edith Schrock, Lancaster, Pa.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Alma Shultz, Lancaster, Pa.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Ethan Stuckey, Archbold, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Miriam Tharp, York, Pa.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Scott Via, Lyndhurst, Va.
Peter Voran, North Newton, Kan.
Mary Helen Wade, Sterling, Ill.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Sheryl Weaver, Hartville, Ohio
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Esther Wert, Lebanon, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Fannie Yoder, Elverson, Pa.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Mira Yoder, Plainfield, Ill.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Floyd & Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.
Joyce E. Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.
Ila Zimmerly, Sterling, Ohio

Bible good guys

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless noted otherwise. Next month: Bible Bad Guys.

ACROSS

1. The first Christian martyr
4. Old Testament prophet who married a prostitute
7. She was highly favored and blessed among women.
8. Elisha made an axhead made of this material float (2 Ki. 6).
9. He supported Solomon against Adonijah's attempt to take the throne (1 Ki. 1:8).
10. He survived the fiery furnace.
11. He was righteous, blameless and walked with God.
14. This disciple traveled with Paul for part of his journeys; he also authored two books of the Bible.
16. He received the breath of God.
18. God told Moses to tell the people, "I __ who I am."
19. A prophet of Judah who prophesied against Edom
21. She hid two spies at Jericho.
23. Successor to Moses
25. This led the wise men to Christ.
28. A Godly king of Judah who had an ungodly father, Ahaz
29. David's seer and the man who had David buy the threshing floor that was the site for the future temple (1Ch. 21:9)

DOWN

1. One of the last judges, strong physically but weak morally
2. This prophet encouraged the Hebrew men to divorce the pagan wives they had during the captivity.
3. This prophet challenged the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel.
4. She devoted her son, as she had promised, to the Lord's service.
5. A holy woman who trusted God, even though she laughed at something God said.
6. This priest was a friend to David when David fled from Saul (1 Sam. 22:11).
10. A son of Noah and ancestor of Christ
12. Moses, Elijah, and Isaiah were prophets in the __ Testament.
13. Shepherd-prophet who prophesied to the Northern Kingdom, even though he was a native to Judah.
15. A Godly man and mighty warrior of David whom David sent to the front lines to be killed (2 Sam. 11:15)
16. Father of a multitude
17. This king gave David refuge, and they formed an alliance together (1 Sam.27:2-3).
20. He was an officer under David, Solomon, and Rehoboam and was in charge of revenue (KJV only: 1 Ki. 12:18).
22. This kinsman-redeemer married Ruth
24. ___-nego.
26. The prophet Ahijah told Jeroboam to take this many pieces of the garment he tore to represent the divided kingdom (1 Ki. 11:31).
27. Moses parted the ___ Sea.

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our July 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

June 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the crossword puzzle may be found on page 57.

(Continued from page 5)

discourage—not encourage—the manufacture, sale and use of alcohol as a beverage.— *Dorvin Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

I do remember your writers and editors in prayer. I was disappointed with the editorial in the February issue. The logic used was that if the majority is doing something, it is OK rather than what the Scripture says about an issue. I know Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for the stomach's sake. But that was before Pepto Bismol and other remedies. In Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-32; Leviticus 10:8 and Ephesians 5:18, the Bible clearly speaks against the use of strong drink. We need to hear more Scripture from our pulpits and church literature.—*Dean Swartzendruber Kalona, Iowa*

I was appalled with the February editorial on Mennonites and alcohol. The comparison of consuming alcohol to apparel is hardly debatable. Every alcoholic started consuming alcohol in moderation, legally or illegally. The end result is the same. I believe God would smile if Americans and Mennonites would enlighten themselves about alcohol consumption as they have about the effects of using tobacco.

The editorial caused me to conclude that if a majority of Mennonites express approval for consuming alcohol, it becomes an acceptable sin.—*Percy Brockmueller, Freeman, S.D.*

I was disappointed with the editorial in the February issue of *The Mennonite*. How can choosing to change a hair or clothing style be equated with choosing to drink an alcoholic beverage, which is a drug?

Yes, alcohol is a drug. It changes the reaction and judgment of the drinker. For the families that have lost a loved one by the hands of an impaired person driving, I'm sure they would not equate the two. The Mennonite church has made many changes, but choosing to use drugs is not something the church should condone. Who knows when a person's body chemistry changes and judgment and reactions are impaired? It is certainly not the person drinking. Changes are different for each person and many people feel they can drink and still drive. Style changes affect the person making the choice, but drug use affects and often harms other people besides the person choosing.

I would hope *The Mennonite* would be more careful about thinking through changes that are coming about in the church and never choose to condone things that can harm other people. —*Shirley Toole, Goshen, Ind.*

For probably more than five decades, I have been reading the *Gospel Herald* (now *The Mennonite*) consistently and with pleasure and appreciation. However, I was deeply disappointed to have our official denominational paper approve and seemingly promote the use of an alcoholic beverage. I am saddened when I think of the many whose lives have been devastated by the use of alcoholic beverages. Yes, some of those have even been a part of our Anabaptist heritage.—*Ben F. Lapp, Watsontown, Pa.*

I recognize the value of openly discussing issues along with correcting misconceptions such as: Jesus' wine was grape juice or our forebears were all teetotalers. But it felt like the Mennonite church has now officially pronounced alcohol good and the discussion is over. I respond on behalf of my mother, whose family of nine children was devastated by her father's addiction to alcohol. While the editorial says, "We honor those for whom consumption of alcohol continues to be 'always wrong,'" she would feel walked over, not honored.—*Mary Kauffman Martin, Allentown, Pa.*

I was surprised at the rather cavalier way the February editorial dismissed the previous teaching of some of our churches discouraging the use of alcoholic beverages. I am not advocating the prohibition of alcoholic drinks. However, given the pain and shame alcohol has caused many families in the church and community, we might do well to follow the encouragement of the Apostle Paul to be sensitive about practices that might harm our sisters and brothers.—*Luke S. Martin, Allentown, Pa.*

I found the editorial disturbing. The comparison of Mennonite traditions—such as cape dresses, plain coats and prayer coverings—in the same light as the use of alcoholic beverages was a little fickle. My point is not to make a judgment as to the right or wrong of moderate drinking.

There is a strong case against the use of a church periodical advertising and suggesting that the drinking of alcoholic beverages is in the same category as wearing of jewelry, makeup, etc. Many of these traditions have been harmful in some ways yet lack in comparison the magnitude of the use of alcohol, even when those traditions were abused. The use of percentages in justifying your premise is pure and simple "political" in avoiding the real issue. —*Luke Drescher, Harrisonburg, Va.*

First Thessalonians 5:22 says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (KJV). Might this Scripture be speaking to the use of alcohol?—*Zella Kauffman, Souderton, Pa.*

Someday instead of a smile or glib editorial on the benefits of wine, you will look in the casket of a son, daughter or neighbor who was killed because of alcohol.

I think it would be a benefit for the editors and readers of *The Mennonite* to allow one page in *The Mennonite* to publish the June 8, 1989, editorial by Daniel Hertzler in the *Gospel Herald*. —*Curt Nussbaum, Kidron, Ohio*

Investing in hope

The hope encouraged by Scripture

Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.— Romans 15:4 (TNIV)

These words glisten with meaning in the context of the fledgling church at Rome. As a spiritual mentor, Paul the Apostle was distressed that church members were arguing about differences that, in the end, didn't make a difference to God.

Even worse, their relationships were marked by judgmental attitudes, moral contempt and spiritual obstacles that blocked the road to faith. Paul expressed a desire that the God who gives endurance and encouragement" would give them "the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice" they could "glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 5-6).

Paul addressed the people who were strong, urging them to bear with the "failings of the weak." In so doing, he showed that in order to get along with others we will need to "put up with" or "endure" the behaviors of others. I suppose all of us have had that feeling, even about our closest family members or work associates. Pause for a moment to reflect: Do you ever feel like you have to "put up with" people in your circle of fellowship? Certainly Jesus did. He said as much to his disciples in Mark 9:19.

Perhaps we too readily hang our hopes for the church on false premises, such as the unrealistic beliefs that others will change to be like us. Many a bride or bridegroom started out their marriage with the hope that their spouse would make major changes for them. If you're one of those people, let me ask, How's that been working for you so far?

Paul urges a different kind of hope, rooted in the example of Jesus and other biblical characters who learned to endure the weaknesses of others. The Scriptures are replete with stories of people who "put up" with others in order to help them grow.

We desperately need this reminder. Our church is sorely tempted to follow the pattern of this world. We are sharply divided at times, too often on the basis of political preferences.

In contrast, I was encouraged by the meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) in late March. There I witnessed leaders from across Mennonite Church USA talk about genuine differences with love and respect. They also spoke of ways they nurture the hope that is encouraged by Scripture and built on the foundation that has already been laid—that of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Juan Montez, moderator of Iglesia Menonita Hispana, gave a moving testimony. He spoke of IMH's intent to put on the shoes of grace and peace so that they can walk together with Anglos and other racial/ethnic groups who feel differently about the choice of Phoenix as a convention site in 2013. He suggested that the willingness of IMH to work with undocumented immigrants is like the commitment of Barnabas (the Son of Encouragement) to work with John Mark. At the time, Paul wasn't willing to "put up" with the young man who had earlier left the missionary team. But later, Paul wrote that John Mark was helpful in his ministry. (See Acts 15:36-41; 2 Timothy 4:11).

Juan hopes that Mennonite Church USA may yet come to see how undocumented believers can be useful for ministry in the church.

I wouldn't give a nickel for church unity based solely on common bloodlines, religious heritage or political preferences. But I will pour out my life to help Mennonite Church USA find a unity based solidly on commitment to Jesus Christ and nurtured through the encouragement of the Scriptures. To that end, the recent CLC gave me new hope. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

I wouldn't give a nickel for church unity based solely on common bloodlines, religious heritage, or political preferences.

CAR-RT LOTC059
134561 937 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P49
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 707
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

Unconventional conventions?

Everett J. Thomas

A difficult experience at our national convention in Columbus, Ohio, in 2009 is now providing impetus to evaluate the way Mennonite Church USA gathers every two years. Executive director Ervin Stutzman addressed the issue in his April report to the Executive Board.

"The experience of Pink Mennos at Columbus in 2009," Stutzman said, "introduced a new level of engagement in controversial matters. ... The techniques of social advocacy and confrontation that we have taught young adults in our schools has come to haunt our church's most visible gathering, to the end that convention-goers feel immense pressure to take up sides against one another on [homosexuality]."

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller is the director of convention planning. In her report to the Executive Board, she said that some large congregations will send their youth groups to Pittsburgh 2011 but have said they will not participate in the future if activists "employ strategies similar to what took place in Columbus."

> Experimenting with "unconventional conventions" could test whether our current practices are the ones that make us strongest as a church.

Swartzendruber Miller also listed four other factors causing a decrease in youth attendance:

- Some groups now employ a four-year cycle that affords youth one convention and one significant mission trip during high school;
- Some churches send their youth on mission trips instead of to convention;
- The financial cost for attending convention;
- A shrinking youth population among Mennonite Church USA families.

Mennonite Church USA's biennial gathering is more than a youth convention. It is actually multiple conventions: adult, young adult, youth, junior youth and children.

But the youth convention is its economic engine; it brings thousands of youth and hundreds of adult sponsors. Those numbers create a significant economy of scale. Registration numbers from Columbus 2009 illustrate the importance of youth convention participation:

Adult convention: 2,536
Youth and sponsors: 4,200
Junior youth: 271
Children: 175

Were the youth convention to be disconnected from the adult convention, the adult convention could meet in a smaller venue. That is what some people want. Others like big-city venues and argue that it would be a great loss to bifurcate the youth experience from the adult experience.

Mennonite Church USA has had a decade with large biennial gatherings. Now may be a good time to take a hard look at the question. Here is one proposal:

Contracts are signed for Phoenix 2013 and Kansas City, Kan., in 2015. But if the 2015 contract can be renegotiated for a smaller attendance, have the youth convention gather in Kansas while the adult convention meets in conjunction with Mennonite World Conference's assembly in Harrisburg, Pa.

Or, for those who think we ought to try regional youth gatherings, plan for those in 2015. Such a plan would allow for youth groups on a four-year cycle to pick which kind of convention they want.

The law of unintended consequences would certainly pertain to such a shift. One consequence might be a significant financial loss for the Executive Board. We may also lose the emerging sense of national identity growing among us.

But there may be positive consequences. Regional youth gatherings may strengthen relationships for area conferences participating in them. Unknown is whether more or fewer people would register for smaller regional gatherings.

As Mennonite Church USA turns 10 years old in July, it will be time to assess some of our conventional wisdom. Experimenting with "unconventional conventions" in 2015 could test whether our current practices are the ones that make us strongest as a church.—*ejt*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

The Mennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002737 2

End of an era

AMBS LIBRARY ELKHART, IN

MENNONITE PUBLISHING HOUSE

June 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:
- Finding Jesus at camp
- The effects of SB 1070
- How work-friendly is your church?
- A different kind of power
- Books on spirituality, science, politics

Mennonite
Church
USA

Calling all woodworkers

Volunteers are needed to build small furniture, display podiums and conference room tables for the Mennonite Church USA Elkhart Office project.

Architectural designs and wood provided.

Please e-mail Volunteers@MennoniteUSA.org
or call toll-free 1-866-866-2876, ext. 23043.

Joining **together.**
Investing in **hope.**
www.MennoniteUSA.org/JoiningTogether

TheMennonite June 2011 | Volume 14, Number 6

ON THE COVER: Insert: 1957 photo from Mennonite Publishing House archives. Background photo by Dee Birkey

CONTENTS

AMBS LIBRARY ELKHART, IN

12 **End of an era**
—John E. Sharp

18 **Finding Jesus at camp**
—Ann Minter Fetters

21 **Boldly embody the love of Jesus**
—Aaron Kauffman

24 **The effects of SB 1070**
—Gayle Wiens

28 **The church and the message of peace**
—Gilberto Flores

31 **How work-friendly is your church?**
—Wally Kroeker

32 **The Earth: handle with prayer**
—Jan Johnson

37 **García to become new MWC executive secretary**—Byron Rempel-Burkholder

38 **Menno Village is refuge for quake evacuees**—Wil LaVeist

40 **Fuel for extremism beyond bin Laden, says prof**—Bonnie Price Lofton

43 **Making a Congo cloth connection**—Nancy Myers

45 **No disciplinary action for WDC pastor**
—Gordon Houser

46 **Phoenix decision: lessons in intercultural transformation**—Glen Guyton

49 **Four priorities may expand to seven**—
Anna Groff

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
June 2011 | Volume 14, Number 6

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Wait until next convention

Regarding "'Pittsburgh Experiment' May Mean Few Resolutions" (April): Since it is a dramatic departure from accepted practice, and since it will be difficult to ensure that all Pittsburgh 2011 delegates will have sufficiently integrated the impact of the proposed "Pittsburgh Experiment," it would be more prudent to wait until the following convention to [discontinue the practice of passing resolutions]. Also, groups that intend to network with others of like mind from distant locations across the national conference may find prohibitive the logistics of getting consensus from their group to draft a joint resolution ahead of time. Since the impact on the Delegate Assembly is akin to a constitutional revision, two years are warranted to implement such a major course correction."*—Eber Rice-Smucker, Goshen, Ind.*

Saddened and distressed

Regarding "Spaulding Dismissed From Worship Council" (May): I don't understand the denominational polity. We would be wise to be aware that this stance of the church is on the wrong side of history. It will eventually change if I and others who hold a different view stay in and work for change—just like the change in our dress, women having a voice, slavery and divorce. Change is inevitable in any church that will survive. Every change begins with someone who has thought deeply about their faith. We are all made in the image of God, and God has no favorites. Jesus, who we say we believe is the embodiment of God, hung out with and welcomed into his circles the ragamuffins of his time, the prostitutes, tax collectors, drunkards and, I suspect, those of a different sexual orientation. And Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." And so I will. It is sad that Mennonite Church USA has said "go" to such a gifted, spiritual man. I offer prayers.
—Rebecca Sommers, Goshen, Ind.

I am distressed by the decision of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership to remove Randall Spaulding from membership on the Binational Worship Council. As a member of the Hymnal Supplement Committee, I observed Randy grow into his role as a denominational music and worship leader. His collaborative spirit, theological clarity, wise pastoral insight and superb musicianship were great gifts to the committee, but perhaps more than these, his vision for what the church needs to sing in such challenging times helped all of us make the choices that have made the hymnal supplements such a treasured resource in the church.

When it came time to form the Binational Worship Council, it was clear to everyone that Randy's voice was needed. He has served there with distinction and would have helped lead the way in the creation of new worship and music resources for the church. I mourn the grievous loss of his voice, energy and wisdom. In the midst of this struggle, I am grateful for the grace God has given Randy and his congregation to continue to be kind, generous and compassionate toward all of us.
—Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind.

Some medication not necessary

"Be Careful What Drugs You Take" by Gordon Houser (April) caught my attention. It was a surprise to find an article of this nature in *The Mennonite*, but I was glad to see it. It confirms my thinking for quite some time as to why doctors think senior citizens need multiple medications. My husband and I are familiar with two of the items listed in the article. According to the study, neither one is necessary unless there is a specific problem. Drug companies aren't going to admit something isn't necessary when they reap huge profits.—*Elsie M. Pennington, Lancaster, Pa.*

Tragic results in the church

When I left the farm to spend four years in two of our church colleges to prepare, in mid-life, for pastoral ministry, I would often come home from class and say to my wife, "What will become of the church when what is taught in class today is in leadership?"

Now in my 80s, I have seen some of the tragic results. Whatever became of the old fashioned good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching by the Holy Spirit that is available to all who know him and not just highly intellectual professors?

Theology doesn't make one a Christian; a relationship with Jesus does. A true relationship with him will change your life and way of living. It is all about a relationship, not theology or an issue.—*Percy Gerig, Lebanon, Ore.*

Troubled by some letters

Thank you for publishing the Virginia winery article (January). You fulfilled your mission to be a forum for the church to discuss faith and life issues. Hopefully we can pass the test of "agreeing and disagreeing in love."

I was troubled by some of the March letters that attacked *The Mennonite* for being, as I believe, the forum for Mennonite Church USA.—*Maurice Brubaker, State College, Pa.*

Disagrees with letter writers

I've been feeling sorry for the beating Everett Thomas has taken over what I regarded as extremely temperate remarks about alcohol ("Mennonites and Alcohol," February). In the letters published in the May issue, Thomas' words were branded as "cavalier," "glib" and "fickle." They were anything but. In fact, Thomas' editorial seemed to me quite careful: respectful of tradition, on one hand, and the need for discernment by each succeeding generation on the other.—*Roger Martin, Lawrence, Kan.*

Mennonites and alcohol

Editor's note: *This is the third and final issue in which we will publish letters that comment on the February editorial. The following letters are published in the order they were received:*

I was appalled, shocked and disappointed by the February editorial giving sanction to drinking alcohol. This is a gross contradiction of my long-held perception of Mennonites: a holy people untainted by worldly standards. They have historically "come out from the world," refusing to "touch the unclean," as the Scriptures define those whom God receives. Citing an increase in Mennonite drinking and seeking validation from New Testament culture, in the jargon of my college debating experience, is "begging the questions."

This is not merely a cultural issue. It is a moral issue, giving approval to imbibing our nation's greatest evil and supporting the nefarious liquor industry. It is a sad day when the leadership of the church mistakes evil for good. This has been the modus operandi of the mainline denominations, much to their spiritual demise. But when the conservative, biblical, evangelical church allows the world to reshape its moral values instead of changing our

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Sometime this summer, the last employees working at the Mennonite Publishing Network building in Scottdale, Pa., will turn off the lights and lock the door. The "Scottdale era" in Mennonite publishing will come to an end (page 12).

To mark this ending—and to celebrate the more than 100 years that community ministered to Mennonite congregations through print media—we decided to commission a cover story for this issue. Who better to write such a piece than John Sharp? A historian now working for Hesston (Kan.) College, John pastored the Scottdale Mennonite Church from 1989 to 1995. The cover photo illustrates the size of the Mennonite Publishing House staff in the 1950s, when Scottdale was considered the "capital" of the Mennonite Church.

Summer is also a time for children to participate in camp programs. Ann Minter Fetters (page 18) compares the positive childhood experience she had at a Mennonite camp after a negative experience in another church camp.

Although Arizona's immigration law enforcement is not making as many headlines these days, the reality for undocumented residents continues to be negative. Gayle Wiens (page 24) reports on the experiences of our brothers and sisters in the Unidos de Gracia congregation.

For those who followed closely Mennonite Church USA's decision to hold our 2013 convention in Phoenix, Glen Guyton's News Analysis (page 46) provides a first-person account from the leader in the middle of that difficult decision-making process.

As we provide each spring, a special commencement section features Mennonite Church USA college, university and seminary commencements in May. Brief summaries of each release and photos begin on page 50.—*Editor*

Ross T. Bender, educator, pastor, administrator, dies

ELKHART, Ind.—Ross T. Bender, dean emeritus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), died April 21 in Goshen, Ind. In his 81 years of life, he devoted himself to service and leadership in the Mennonite church, including congregational, denominational and global ministries.

Much of Bender's service was in seminary teaching and administration. He was professor of Christian education at Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary and AMBS, Elkhart, over a span of 34 years. He also served as director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies toward the end of his tenure at AMBS. He was named dean emeritus of AMBS when he retired in 1996.

Bender was pastor of congregations in Waterloo, Ontario, and Lansdale, Pa., and was principal of Rockway Mennonite High School before beginning his seminary teaching. From 1961 to 1971, Bender served with the Mennonite Commission for Christian Education. During a two-year leave from the seminary, 1972 to 1974, he was the first executive secretary of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. During a later leave, 1984 to 1989, he was pastor of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.

Bender was moderator of Mennonite Church General Assembly from 1981 to 1983 and president of Mennonite World Conference from 1984 to 1990. He also served on committees for the Mennonite Church, the World Council of Churches and the Association of Theological Schools.—*AMBS*

MWC Assembly 16 to be held in Harrisburg, Pa.

TAIPEI, Taiwan—At this year's meeting, May 4-10, the Mennonite World Conference's Executive Committee endorsed the Pennsylvania State Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg as the assembly venue for 2015. The inviting churches will decide between two available dates: July 21-26 or Aug. 4-9.

A major worry is the difficulty many global visitors face in getting entry visas. The United States places severe restrictions on visitors from many parts of the global South, particularly those between ages 18 and 25. Representatives of the Young Anabaptists network pled that U.S. churches promise to advocate for and help finance youth who want to attend the Global Youth Summit at the assembly.—*MWC*

Eanes named executive director of MennoMedia

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Russ Eanes, director of finance and operations for Mennonite Publishing Network, will become executive director of MennoMedia on July 1. He will move to Harrisonburg, where the head office of the new agency formed by merging MPN and Third Way Media will be located.

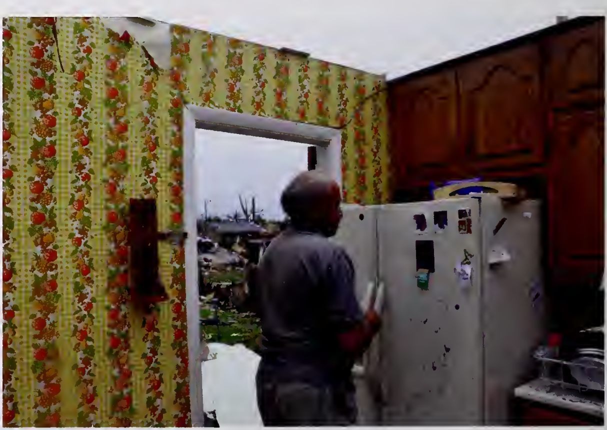
Eanes has served MPN from Scottdale, Pa., since 2007. He played an integral role in the joint staff team that developed the business plan for MennoMedia and is currently engaged in laying the groundwork for the merger. —*Mennonite Church USA*

Landis ends service as peace and justice head

ELKHART, Ind.—After 16 years in leadership with the Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church USA, Susan Mark Landis of Orrville, Ohio, has moved on from her position as denominational minister for peace and justice as of mid-April.

In September 2002, Landis and the MCC Washington Office initiated a "prayer and faxing" campaign that collected 17,400 signatures—enough to earn J. Daryl Byler (then executive director of the MCC Washington Office), Jim Schrag (former executive director of Mennonite Church USA) and Landis a visit to the West Wing to advise the White House on possible nonviolent resolution before the Iraq War.

Landis also raised funds for Anabaptist churches in Colombia to purchase newspaper ads inviting Colombians to a celebration of "Pan y Paz" (bread and peace) in Bogotá on Sept. 21, 2002, the



Steve Craven

Roofless in Alabama

Frank Stewart, a tornado survivor in Pratt City, Ala., saves photos that were on his refrigerator. The tornado took the roof off of his kitchen, but the photos stayed on the fridge.—*Mennonite Disaster Service*

Photo contest winner

"Glass of Fruit" by Wilford Yoder was a winner in the Still Life category in *The Mennonite*'s 2011 Photo Contest. Yoder also won in the Nature category. Other winners were Todd Widmer in Work/Play and Joel Lehman in Worship. See www.themennonite.org/issues/14-4/articles/Photo_contest_winners_announced.—*Gordon Houser*

International Day of Prayer for Peace. —*Mennonite Church USA*

EMM considers broad structural changes

SALUNGA, Pa.—Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) is in the midst of an organizational review that is looking ahead to strategic changes in its administrative structures.

President Richard Showalter explains that this review is driven by sweeping changes in the global Christian movement as well as a decline in general mission giving to EMM.

Showalter says, "Mission agencies in the West are being joined by local congregations and individuals who are eager for new roles in mission, and are less dependent on the institutional expressions of the past."

Showalter explains that in 2012 there will likely be a drop in estate funding due to the termination of income from a large estate gift received four years ago. In addition, EMM continues to see a drop in undesignated contributions. Over the past 10 years there has been an annual decline of about 3 percent in undesignated giving to EMM—giving that undergirds both field programs and general administrative costs for EMM.—*EMM*

The Mennonite wins seven awards at ACP

CHICAGO—At the Associated Church Press' annual awards ceremony April 29, *The Mennonite* received seven awards for journalistic excellence. The seven awards matches a previous record set by *The Mennonite* in 2009.

Editor Everett J. Thomas received the award of excellence for "Words for Worship," his September 2010 profile of Marlene Kropf, and poet Tania Runyan received an award of excellence for her poem "After the Annunciation" (April 2010). Eileen Ahearn received the second place award of merit for "Helping Those in the Hell of PTSD" (November 2010). Honorable mention awards went to *The Mennonite*'s designer, Dee Birkey, for her July 2010 cover, "Love, Sex and Marriage," Susan Ortman Goering for her devotional article "Unity" (October 2010), Penelope Adams Moon for her February 2010 faith story, "The Push and Pull of Faith," and Katerina Friesen for her poem "An Ethiopian Mennonite Shares the Pulpit" (February 2010).

The Associated Church Press is the oldest press association for church publications in North America and has 110 members.—*The Mennonite*

Donors can text to give to new Bluffton building

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Judson Laipply of online "Evolution of Dance" fame and fellow alumni Ginny Buckingham, Tyson Goings, Daryl Dowdy and Lou Stokes have helped with a Bluffton University video shoot promoting the final push for funds for the new Health and Fitness Education Center on campus.

The video shows varsity and intramural athletes, fans and musicians sharing space in Founders Hall. Along with hosting varsity basketball and volleyball, Founders serves as the venue for academic presentations and large music performances. View the video at www.bluffton.edu/reach/txt/.—*Bluffton University*

Jim Bridges

Good Friday witness in Seattle

Participants pray with symbolic blood on their hands April 22 at the Federal Building in downtown Seattle. Seattle Mennonite Church pastor Weldon Nisly and associate pastor Sarah Klaassen led the Good Friday worship and witness. Eleven were arrested. —*Weldon Nisly*

Mary for Mennonites

Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

The sassy lass of the silver bells and cockle shells was my first Marian acquaintance. I thought it rather bold to have "contrary" and "pretty" in the same nursery rhyme. She was someone spunky I might like to know, who'd join me in my own cantankerous ways.

As a girl, I also met Mary mother, meek and mild—the one who gave birth to Jesus—and I didn't find her nearly so intriguing. Content to sit in my family's crèche sets each December, she whiled away the remainder of the year in the musty basement. Her bowed image—receiving the word of Gabriel or hovering over the manger—left me flat.

Instead of quietly praying, "Let it be," I strove for courage, justice and compassion. I would not bow like Mary. There was too much masculine power concentrated in the church, and I didn't trust that what the church asked of me was also what God asked of me.

And I wasn't going to accept mother Mary as a consolation prize for centuries of iniquity. I wanted a Trinity that looked more like I did—female, young, active—and more like the gifted women I saw all around me in the church and beyond. And I still do.

I didn't trust that what the church asked of me was also what God asked of me.

As I grew into adulthood, I heard leaders in the Mennonite church caution against "Mary worship." Perhaps these leaders worried that Christians who show devotion to Mary were less devoted to Jesus. Perhaps they—and I, too—wanted to protect Jesus from competition for our allegiance and affection. We wanted Jesus alone as our mediator, not a meek bystander to the Divine.

My heart leaned toward the contrarians in the Bible: Jacob the wrestler, the Psalmists and prophets who demand justice and mercy for all, and, often, Jesus.

Re-enter Mary.

A Mary who, before she says, "Let it be," says, "How can this be?"

A Mary who, bursting at the seams spiritually and physically, lets loose a poem to her relative Elizabeth that is as rabble-rousing as ancient Hebrew prophets and modern hip-hop poets (Luke 1:46-55).

A Mary who gives birth to a son, rears him in faithfulness and wisdom, attends weddings with him and eventually accompanies him to the cross.

A Mary who sounds a lot like the mother eagle who "spreads its wings, takes [its young] up, and bears them aloft on its pinions" (Deuteronomy 32:11).

A Mary who mothers her son so that he might later mother Jerusalem: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem. … How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34).

A Mary who, after all, does say yes to God's plan for her.

A Mary who is full of grace: a sorrowing mother and a friend to many.

This is the Mary, "the first disciple," so many Christians love and encounter in surprising places. Her image is painted onto chapel walls and plastic dashboard figurines. She has even begun to come out of the closets and off the shelves of some Mennonites. Prophet and witness, she is mother of God and part of the communion of saints that surround us.

Hearing stories of profound encounters with Mary reminds me that God conforms Godself "to suit our sight,"* as one poet puts it, whether filtered through the ever-faithful presence of Mary or through the words of a friend.

Mary's re-entry into my imagination has meant a re-evaluation of her character—and my own. Perhaps the contrary and the meek are not in opposition, as I once supposed, but are brought together in the courageous persons of Jesus and his mother Mary.

May we join with Mary in proclaiming:
My soul magnifies the Lord, and my
spirit rejoices in God my Savior
(Luke 1:46b-47). TM

*From "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe" by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Sunday's theme

by Emily K. Bright

The people of my poems love each other
indirectly. Not receiving too much credit.
Like the man at work today who answered
"How are you?" with "Blessed." I thought,
That's not an answer to the question.
Afterward, I spent the day remembering:
I'm alive and breathing, drinking tea
with cinnamon. All day that was beautiful.
Later afternoon, the crew team spuming
wings of mist beyond me on the Mississippi,
each man's stroke and strain of back
a promise to his boat-fellows, a steady line
to shore. Someone else can speak about
the heart of love. I'll keep its faithful
offerings. Blooming sky this evening,
and footsteps at the door.

Emily K. Bright lives in Menomonie, Wis.

Too much information leads to bad decisions

Maybe you've had experiences like mine. I go to the grocery store with instructions to get cottage cheese, or yogurt or bread. I get to the shelf and find a dozen varieties of bread, half that many of cottage cheese or yogurt. Should I get low-fat, nonfat, small curd, large curd?

Or I go to a coffee counter and come face to face with dozens of various kinds. My gaze gets blurry. "I just want coffee," I tell the clerk. Fortunately, she's encountered a dullard like me before and simply asks, "What size?" I say, "Small." Oops, small is really "tall." Go figure.

Do I sound like an old fogey, longing for simpler times when you were lucky to have a choice other than white bread, and no one had heard of decaf coffee (other than Sanka)? At last I have some science on the side of my complaint about too many choices.

In the article "How Mental Meltdown Comes from Information Overload" (*Spirituality & Health*, May-June), Stephen Kiesling refers to Barry Schwartz, a professor of psychology at Swarthmore College, who noted several years ago that having more choices does not make us happier. In fact, "increasing the number of possible choices not only makes decisions more difficult, it makes us less happy with whatever we finally choose."

Schwartz's article, "Can You Say No to Too Many Choices?" (*Spirituality & Health*, May 2007), made the following observations (among others):

- As the number of potential partners people encounter in an evening of "speed dating" increases, the number of matches they make decreases.
- As the number of retirement plans available increases, the chance that people will choose any plan declines.
- As the number of job possibilities available to college seniors increases, their satisfaction with the job search decreases. Job seekers who want the "best possible" job, although they get more and better offers than seekers aiming for "good enough" jobs, are less satisfied nonetheless. They are more stressed, anxious, pessimistic, regretful, disappointed, frustrated and depressed.

Since this article was published, Kiesling reports, neuroscientists doing brain research have raised another serious alarm. Angelika Dimoka, director of the Center for Neural Decision Making at Temple University, says, "With too much information, people's decision making makes less and less sense."

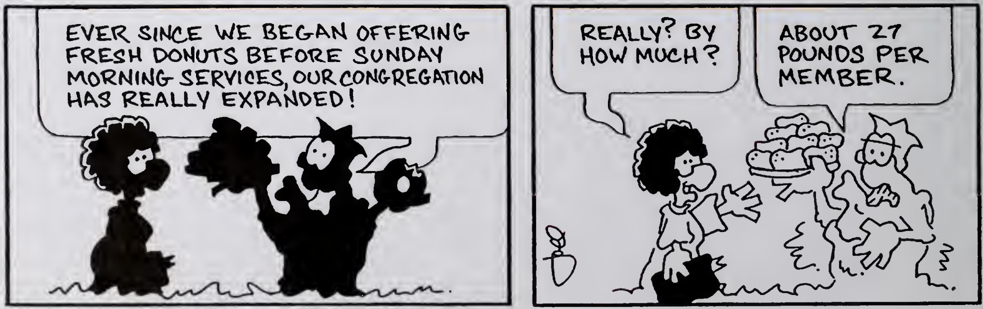
Dimoka had volunteers take part in an experiment that involved trying to get the best price, given "a dizzying array of possible options." She found that as the information load increased, so did activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (PFC), a region responsible both for decision making and controlling emotions.

Sharon Begley of *Newsweek* interviewed Dimoka and reports: "As the bidders were given more and more information, at some point the activity in the dorsolateral PFC suddenly fell off, as if a circuit breaker popped. ... They start making stupid choices because the brain region responsible for smart decisions has essentially left the premises. For the same reason, their frustration and anxiety soar."

Kiesling draws lessons from such research. One is empathy for those who have to handle large-scale disasters and face an onslaught of information. Another is how we face the onslaught of information we encounter each day. "The closer we stay plugged in," he writes, "the closer we stay to that moment when the dorsolateral PFC shuts down, and all our decisions become bad ones."—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


EVER SINCE WE BEGAN OFFERING FRESH DONUTS BEFORE SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES, OUR CONGREGATION HAS REALLY EXPANDED!
REALLY? BY HOW MUCH?
ABOUT 27 POUNDS PER MEMBER.
© Pontius.com

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

> “We’ve come up with this idea that Muslims are our enemy and that Muslim terrorism and extremism are the most important enemies we should be combating. I think this is bogus.”—*Miroslav Volf, author of* Allah: A Christian Response, *in* Christianity Today

The emotional and rational are intertwined

Researchers across an array of diverse fields—neuroscience, psychology, sociology, behavioral economics—remind us of a few key insights, writes David Brooks in a March 7 column. “First, the unconscious parts of the mind are most of the mind, where many of the most impressive feats of thinking take place. Second, emotion is not opposed to reason; our emotions assign value to things and are the basis of reason. Finally, we are not individuals who form relationships. We are social animals, deeply interpenetrated with one another, who emerge out of relationships.” He goes on: “We don’t only progress as reason dominates the passions. We also thrive as we educate our emotions.” This research is scientific, “but it directs our attention toward a new humanism,” he writes. “It’s beginning to show how the emotional and the rational are intertwined.”—*New York Times*

5 ways to save $1 trillion from the Pentagon

1. Reduce aircraft carriers: $15 billion for each of 11 carriers
2. Use more unmanned aircraft: $500 billion
3. Shrink missile defense: $60 billion
4. Reduce global presence: $287 billion
5. Trim spy spending: $112 billion

—*Time*

People of mixed races or ethnicities growing

The crop of students moving through college right now includes the largest group of mixed-race people ever to come of age in the United States, writes Susan Saulny in the *New York Times* (Jan. 29), and they are only the vanguard: the country is in the midst of a demographic shift driven by immigration and intermarriage. “One in seven new marriages is between spouses of different races or ethnicities, according to data from 2008 and 2009 that was analyzed by the Pew Research Center,” she writes. Multiracial and multiethnic Americans (usually grouped together as “mixed race”) are one of the country’s fastest-growing demographic groups. “Many young adults of mixed backgrounds are rejecting the color lines that have defined Americans for generations in favor of a much more fluid sense of identity.”—*New York Times*

Farm subsidies

- Percentage of farmers in the United States who did not collect subsidy payments in 2007: **62**
- Percentage of subsidies collected by 10 percent of farms from 1995 to 2009: **74**

—*Yes! Magazine*

No slaveholders allowed

On April 30, delegates to the Thomas Jefferson District of the Unitarian Universalist Association voted overwhelmingly to drop the name, with its slave-holding legacy. The district that spans North and South Carolina as well as parts of Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee will be known as the Southeast District.—*Religion News Service*

10%

of U.S. congregations have begun to recover from the recession, and more than 40 percent are now stable or increasing financially, according to the 2010 Faith Communities Today national survey of more than 20 religious groups.—*Religion News Service*

Unwelcome

In the United States since 1950, 13 million more people have been deported than were granted permanent residency. The number of deportees is up in the last 20 years and is accelerating thanks to the Secure Communities program designed to deport people with criminal records. In reality, this program is deporting undocumented immigrants guilty of petty crimes. For example, the Valenzuela brothers have received notice of deportation hearings. U.S. residents since 1955, both are Vietnam veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, which they claim led to their separate misdemeanors.—*Christian Century*

10 best things to do for animals

1. Rejoice we are part of the animal kingdom.
2. Respect all life.
3. Open our minds, in humility, to animals to learn from them.
4. Teach our children to respect and love nature.
5. Be wise stewards of life on earth.
6. Value and help preserve the sounds of nature.
7. Refrain from harming life in order to learn about it.
8. Have the courage of our convictions.
9. Praise and help those who work for animals and the natural world.
10. Act knowing we are not alone and live with hope.—*Yes! Magazine*

A century of publishing ends at Scottdale, Pa.

Mention 606 to anyone nurtured in Mennonite congregations since the publication of the red 1969 *Mennonite Hymnal*, and the rich harmony and lively tempo of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" will come to mind. This "Mennonite anthem" of praise, often sung enthusiastically from memory, stirs the soul, renews the spirit and directs attention to God's everlasting goodness and grace. Its harmony also serves as a metaphor for the strength of congregational identity and mission.

End of an era

by John E. Sharp

1951 MPH Linotype machine operators.
Photo provided

This hymn is a product of the Mennonite Publishing House, now Mennonite Publishing Network, which for 103 years has generated resources for Mennonite congregations and conferences in Canada and the United States. This publishing ministry of the church has been located on a hill in Scottdale, Pa., within sight of Laurel Ridge, the westernmost landform of the Allegheny Mountains. But the Scottdale era is coming to an end. Its operations will move to Harrisonburg, Va., this summer as it merges with Third Way Media to form MennoMedia. The end of the Scottdale era prompts this retrospective.

The Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) was founded in 1908 by a young cadre of visionaries who believed that a church with any promise needed to nurture its theology and shape its practice. As a representative publishing board of the "old" Mennonite Church, they consolidated the assets of two smaller, private publishing ventures and wrested control of the *Herald of Truth*, published since 1864 by pioneer publisher John F. Funk of Elkhart, Ind. They merged two papers, *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Witness* to produce *Gospel Herald*, which served as the denominational voice until it merged with *The Mennonite* in 1998.

Why Scottdale?

When the Mennonite Book and Tract Society formed in 1892, its offices were in the home of the treasurer. When new treasurers were elected, the office moved from Elkhart, Ind., to Scottdale, Spring Grove, Pa., then back to Scottdale, where secretary-treasurer A. D. Martin lived. In 1905, Martin, Aaron Loucks and Jacob S. Loucks, all of Scottdale, organized the Gospel Witness Company with a board of nine, representing various Mennonite conferences. They published *Gospel Witness*, which they hoped could become the official periodical of the church.

Aaron Loucks was an entrepreneur and business leader, cofounder of numerous church institutions and pastor of the Mennonite congregation in Scottdale. Aaron's father, Jacob, owned a large share of the land on which the town of Scottdale was built. The elder Loucks had donated the land for the Mennonite meetinghouse, built in 1893, and provided both land and finances for the Gospel Witness Company. The younger Loucks became the first publisher of the new denominational enterprise.

Clearly, the prior establishment of publishing ventures, the visionaries drawn by those ventures, the entrepreneurship of Aaron Loucks and the generosity of Jacob Loucks made Scottdale a sensible location for the new publishing house. Furthermore, Scottdale was located between the larger Mennonite populations in the East and the scattered and less developed communities in the Midwest and beyond. Daniel Kauffman, editor of *Gospel Herald*, said that more important than location was the right kind of institution, the character of the people who live and work there and economy. Indeed, Scottdale was promising. It was a prosperous town with a booming steel industry, beautiful homes, 13 churches, 15 doctors, four banks, two newspapers and eight daily trains.

Daniel Kauffman, editor of *Gospel Herald*, said that more important than location was the right kind of institution, the character of the people who live and work there.

New life

The Mennonite Publishing House, its managers and employees added to the prosperity of the town and brought new life to the Scottdale congregation. Mennonite settlers migrated to the region from Bucks County, Pa., beginning in 1789, attracted to the fertile land in the Jacobs Creek Valley. By 1850, 200 members worshipped in two meetinghouses on either side of Scottdale, at Stonerville and Pennsville. But by the end of the century, membership had dwindled to 12. Historians have attributed the decline to a number of factors, including westward migration, reluctance to make the transition from German to English in worship, and the influence of newfound wealth when coal was discovered and the coke and steel industries were developed. Evangelist John S. Coffman lamented the generation "who contended in all goodness of heart for the old ways." The old ways were good, "but they failed to work in a way that kept the good old ways alive" and communicate them to new generations.

It was the Loucks family that had a vision for new vibrant expressions of the old faith. Grandmother Nancy Stauffer Loucks is given credit for fanning the spark into new flame. Two of her grandsons were ordained and charged with leadership—Aaron as minister and Joseph as deacon.

Mennonite Publishing House staff at a picnic in 1957. Photo provided

Coffman believed that Aaron would be an able leader. The fledgling congregation expressed its faith in a bright future by building a new meetinghouse on the highest hill on the Loucks property.

As the nerve center of the church, MPH connected people to each other through its network of communication.

The Mennonite Publishing House was a large part of the bright future. MPH became a magnet for talented and dedicated people who also served the congregation and the Allegheny Conference. They were active in its life and witness; they taught Bible school and Sunday school, preached, shared their faith in the community and started new congregations—North Scottdale and Kingview.

Intellectual center

MPH's mission was to promote reading, provide good things to read, "advance the cause of Christ and promote unity of faith in the church." The publishing mission is important, said J. S. Shoemaker, the first chair of the publishing board and a preacher himself, because "more are being blessed through reading than through preaching." In order to bless its readers, advance the cause of Christ, and promote unity, MPH attracted and recruited the brightest and the best: writers, editors, educators, administrators, press operators and support staff. They made Scottdale the intellectual center of the church. The writers and editors of Scottdale shaped the theology and practice of the church. They produced hymnals, periodicals, educational and devotional products, and teaching resources for every age and for every ministry, from Sunday school, Bible school and clubs to preaching, teaching and worship. As the nerve center of the church, MPH connected people to each other through its network of communication.

Scottdale also attracted new ministries. When the Commission for Christian Education was formed in 1937, its offices were in Scottdale. When Mennonite Youth Fellowship was organized in 1948 as a program of CCE, it was coordinated from Scottdale. When in 1953, the Mennonite Church appointed Paul Erb as its first general secretary, it made sense for Erb to remain in Scottdale, where he was serving as *Gospel Herald* editor. When Eugene Herr became director of Mennonite Youth Fellowship in 1958, he moved to Scottdale.

Exiting Scottdale

But that changed in 1971. That year, delegates meeting in biennial assembly at Kitchener, Ont., approved a new organizational structure for the binational church. The ministries of the new General Assembly would be carried out by five program boards, one of them new, and would be coordinated by a General Board. Amid rumors that there was too much power in Scottdale, the offices of the General Board and the new Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM) would locate elsewhere.

J. Lorne Peachey, then editor of *With* magazine, recalls a chart on a wall in a denominational office. The chart listed the qualifications for the location of new denominational offices. Of seven locations, Scottdale was last; every qualification for Scottdale was negative. The writing on the wall was clear. Scottdale would cease to be the center of power and influence. The General Board offices went to Rosemont, then later Lombard, Ill., with easy access to O'Hare Airport. MBCM offices, with a mandate to provide services to congregational education, evangelism, family life and leadership, were established in Goshen, and later Elkhart, Ind.

A business or a ministry?

"It is easy to become a publisher," John A. Hostetler wrote in 1958, "but it is hard to remain one." That proved to be true for MPH, as it did for many other publishers, but it would not become apparent for some time. A persistent question has been whether a denomination as small as the Mennonite Church could support a publishing enterprise. Publishers produce with the expectation that constituency will purchase the product and provide a return on investment. Markets change, technology changes, loyalties diminish. It was often said that if every Mennonite congregation would buy Mennonite-produced products, Mennonite publishing would remain strong. Beginning in the 1960s, congregations increasingly began shopping around—for something cheaper, more attractive, easier to teach or with a safer theology. Sometimes editors and writers stretched the limits of constituents' tolerance with the fruits of historical-critical methods of Bible study. To write of three books of Daniel or to suggest that Jonah may be an allegory was suspect. Higher criticism, the synoptic problem and the Wellhausen documentary hypothesis sounded dangerous.

During the process of merging General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church publishing agencies, the financial stresses of both agencies became apparent.

What editors and authors believed readers needed wasn't always what readers were willing to buy. If sales of theology or history were low, was Herald Press, the book publishing arm of MPH, obligated to continue publishing the books? It was, as a service to the church. If readers wanted light reading on popular themes, more Amish novels and cookbooks, was it the role of a denominational publisher to provide them?

When in 1960 businessman-publisher Ben Cutrell followed A. J. Metzler as publisher, Cutrell asked the church whether it would subsidize publishing. The answer was no, publishing would have to pay for itself. It was difficult. Typically, the magazines struggled. Some books made money, many did not. When Provident Bookstores were added,

The late Paul Schrock at his desk at MPH in the late 1960s. Photo provided

LINOT E
MANUFACTURED BY
MERGENTHALER LINOTYPE C
NEW YORK, U.S.A.
ORIGINATORS AND IMPROVERS
OF THE LINOTYPE

Dee Birkey

most became assets. In order to capitalize the enterprise and produce cash flow, MPH under Cutrell turned to debenture notes. The notes were loans from individuals, congregations and agencies for a specified length of time. Interest was paid during the term of the loan, usually slightly less than market value. When the loan expired, the lender had the option of calling in the loan or extending it for an additional term. These lenders were happy to invest in church publishing.

In 1978, MPH built a large warehouse. It raised about a fourth of the cost and borrowed the rest. At the time it made sense to build the warehouse, since it was better to print large runs and store them on the assumption that the product would eventually sell; reprinting was expensive. Now MPH had a large debt on the warehouse in addition to its debenture notes, and publishing was becoming more expensive. By the 1980s, MPH no longer had money to upgrade technology, equipment and offices. Leaders and employees, with a heart for the church, made the best of things, operated on shoestring budgets, jerry-rigged machines and renewed debenture notes. By 2001, there were 221 such notes worth $2.4 million.

> In June 2002, Norman Shenk of Lancaster released the results of his thorough financial audit, the first complete audit since 1989.

Merger, demise, and restructuring

During the process of merging General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church publishing agencies, the financial stresses of both agencies became apparent. Both were operating at a loss. In 2001, Faith and Life Press had an operating loss of $167,211, and MPH had a loss of $369,430. Combined losses in 2002 were $793,079. Included in the loss was an unusually large write-off of inventory previously counted an asset. MPH initiated cost-cutting measures that included eliminating medical supplemental insurance for retirees, which raised a storm of protest. They also closed the Scottdale Bookstore and suspended the development of vacation Bible school curriculum and the Mennonite Directory.

In 2001, J. Robert Ramer retired after 15 years as publisher. Dennis Good, who had been publisher of Faith and Life Press from 1997 to 2001, was named Ramer's successor. Having worked in securities and investments, Good recognized a legal dilemma and refused to sign debenture note renewals. MPH leaders were not aware of changes in U.S. securities regulations. The Securities and Exchange Commission had set a limit of 35, after which it was necessary to register with the state department of corporations. Loans across state lines were also problematic. Good's recognition of the legal dilemma set off a chain of events that ended in 2004 as a restructured agency. After a full audit disclosed operating losses and debts of $5.1 million, including the debenture notes, the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) assumed oversight of operations. The MPH board hired consultant Paul Silcox. When Dennis Good took a medical leave, Silcox became acting publisher with a mandate to restructure MPH. Silcox soon earned the reputation among employees as the "hatchet man." Thirty-one jobs were eliminated, including about a third of Scottdale's workforce, saving $700,000 in payroll but creating an atmosphere of anxiety and mistrust. And there was the indebtedness. Mennonite Church USA borrowed $1.5 million from Mennonite Mutual Aid, and Mennonite Church Canada mortgaged property to back a loan of $975,000 to pay creditors, close a costly bank line of credit and fund current operations. In March 2002, the JEC, in an unprecedented move, dismissed the MPH board and assumed responsibility for operations, believing it necessary to restore credibility and to ensure a viable publishing future. Leaders of Allegheny Mennonite Conference, the regional conference that includes Scottdale, initiated a fund-raising campaign to retire outstanding MPH debt and urged the denomination to join the effort. As a result, a churchwide Barn Raising Campaign was launched to retire the debt and provide future funding. Also in March, a grievance committee called MPH to honor its commitments and restore the eliminated medical supplemental insurance benefit to retirees. In June 2002, Norman Shenk of Lancaster released the results of his thorough financial audit, the first complete audit since 1989. Shenk's report showed a negative net worth of $67,000.

In July 2002, Phil Bontrager was appointed new acting chief executive officer to replace Paul Silcox. Bontrager's mandate was to stabilize MPH operationally and financially, determine the appropriate resolution of the outstanding debenture notes and work with the Publishing Transformation Team to implement their vision for a revised, viable publishing agency that was named Mennonite Publishing Network. Bontrager reported to the JEC members—Ron Sawatsky, Jim Harder and Ervin Stutzman—who guided the restructuring process to its successful conclusion in 2004. In September 2002, an unidentified organization made a one-year loan of $2.3 million to repay the debenture notes. Some note holders donated interest earned, and others contributed the principle.

Bontrager's major challenges included building trust in a community that had experienced "profound change" and faced an uncertain future. He recalled recently that he attempted to walk with people in their pain, grief and anger while continuing to implement organizational changes. He found it challenging to balance the need for confidentiality with transparency, especially with news of the Enron, WorldCom and Global Crossing scandals, which generated suspicion and mistrust. MPH employees resented the parallels drawn in the church press to the fraudulent corporations. It was also unfortunate that the Scottdale community "frequently learned of decisions directly affecting them via the church press with limited context or additional information from the denominations," said Bontrager.

Ben Sprunger followed Bontrager as yet another interim CEO and served for four months. In October 2002, the publishing board approved a "lean and clean" designed to inspire confidence and dramatically change publishing. The plan called for closing its printing operation and expected to save $82,000 a year, but it also eliminated 10 more jobs. On Feb. 1, 2003, Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) completed its yearlong restructuring plan, and in April, the interim board appointed Ron Rempel of Waterloo, Ont., as executive secretary. His start date of Aug. 1 coincided with the appointment of a new eight-member board of directors. In January 2004, the Barn Raising Campaign completed its mission by raising $1.3 million to pay more than half the short-term $2.3 million loan made by the anonymous organization. MPN planned to amortize the remaining $1 million over eight years, but in 2006 MPN sold the last of its 10 Provident Bookstores and paid off its remaining debt of $3.1 million. Finally it was free and clear.

In November 2010, after initial hesitation, Mennonite Church Canada joined Mennonite Church USA in approving MPN's merger with Third Way Media and its relocation to Harrisonburg, Va. Rempel explained that the merged entity, to be called MennoMedia, would "be well-equipped for both print and electronic distribution." The new agency is to serve Mennonite Church Canada as well as Mennonite Church USA, though Canadian leaders fear the reduction of MPN staff in Canada. They are also concerned that Third Way Media re-establish its services to Canada, since it has been a U.S.-based ministry of Mennonite Mission Network. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s, Third Way Media, then known as Mennonite Broadcasts, had staff and program in Canada.

Clearly changes were needed in recent MPH operations. But the demise of publishing in Scottdale was long in coming. The reorganization of Mennonite Church structures in 1971 and the subsequent exit of offices and ministries from Scottdale can be seen as the first sign. The changing nature of publishing, new technology, increased cost of publishing and declining denominational loyalty all figure in. So does the church's demand for products that were not cost effective. Mennonite publishing is not alone. The list of other church publishers who have cut staff and services or have closed their doors is long indeed.

New dreams

When MPN leaves Scottdale, it will leave behind the 70,000-square-foot facility on the top of Jacob Loucks' highest hill. Leaders of Scottdale Mennonite Church have written a letter asking church leaders not to abandon the building across the street but to explore possibilities for its continued service to the Scottdale community. Will they create a vision for a new ministry, just as an earlier generation did in 1908? The Scottdale business community is not thriving as it once did, but young people are coming back to Scottdale. Many more youth, some 200, have congregated in nearby Pittsburgh.

While we await new dreams, let us cherish what has been. When we sing 606, let us recall the contributions and dedication of the many who served the church's publishing ministry during its 103 years in Scottdale.

John E. Sharp teaches history at Hesston (Kan.) College and was pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church, 1989-95.

Disclaimer: *The Mennonite* and one of its predecessors, *Gospel Herald*, were part of the publishing enterprise at Mennonite Publishing House until The Mennonite, Inc., formed a not-for-profit corporation in Indiana in August 2002.

Finding Jesus at camp

by Ann Minter Fetters

I counted off to my mother as I stuffed the contents into a duffel bag: "One flashlight, one tooth brush, toothpaste, a wash cloth, a towel and a Bible." I was nervous and excited. It was the summer of 1972, and I had just finished the second grade. My friend Ellen had invited me to attend her church camp for a week, and much to my delight, my parents had given their consent.

Stephen J. Sullivan | sxc.com

The writer's cabin group at Camp Amigo. She is second from right in the back row. Photo provided

A story of two camps and two different experiences in a girl's life

"No shorts or sleeveless shirts allowed," the pamphlet read as I squinted at the small print near the bottom of the list. I refrained from mentioning this part to my mom and crammed some shorts and tank tops in with my other things. I couldn't imagine they would make us wear pants or dresses while hiking through the Indiana woods in the sticky heat of July.

Once Ellen's family dropped us off at the campground and we said our goodbyes, we were ushered over to the swimming pool to hear the camp rules from one of the adults in charge. My excitement soon faded as a wiry old woman lectured us. She had on a worn, plaid dress, her hair pinned up in a bun, as she told us what we could and could not do. As she went through the list, the crooked finger she had been waving in the air pointed itself right at me. "And there will be no one wearing shorts, like this young lady has on," she scolded. "When you get to your cabin," she said as she looked me in the eye, "you'll be changing into long pants or a skirt." I looked down at my pink knit shorts, humiliated at being made an example of. "And one more thing, kids," she continued. "No peein' in the pool."

We campers departed quietly as we were matched up with counselors and made our way to our respective cabins. My counselor, Glenda, was a kind-faced young woman with long, honey-colored hair. Maybe this camp will be OK after all, I reassured myself, as Ellen and I picked our bunks and got settled.

I assume that we did the usual activities at camp that week: arts and crafts, canoeing, swimming, archery. I don't remember much about our days, but I remember our nights clearly. Every evening after supper we gathered at the camp meetinghouse, sitting in our cabin groups on one of the long cement steps that rose before a concrete platform that functioned as a stage. A red-haired, lanky man known as Uncle Dave (we were to call all of the adults aunt or uncle), paced in front of us, telling us Bible stories and leading us in songs. Then, before he dismissed us, he asked for our attention and invited us "to be saved." Night after night he warned us about the fires of hell and the certain Rapture to come. He told us that not even young children would be exempt from God's wrath and that if we would only accept Jesus into our hearts as our Lord and Savior, we could escape from God's punishment and live with him eternally.

"Somewhere in outer space,
God has prepared a place for those who trust him and obey.
Jesus will come again,
and though we don't know when,
the countdown's getting closer every day."

I remember this song especially well; a missionary lady with a gray permanent and a flowered, polyester dress flipped a spiral-bound songbook onto a page showing a drawing of Jesus, his hands spread wide, coming down from the clouds.

"Ten and nine, eight and seven, six and five and four,
call upon the Savior while you may.
Three and two, coming through the clouds in bright array,
The countdown's getting closer every day."

Even though earlier that year I had made a decision to follow Jesus as my mother prayed with me by my bedside, I was afraid.

Whenever Uncle Dave extended this invitation, all shuffling stopped. The only movement was the moths fluttering around the light bulbs overhead. We were then dismissed to return to our cabins, while our counselors remained to visit with any of us who wished to make a commitment. Even though earlier that year I had made a decision to follow Jesus as my mother prayed with me by my bedside, I was afraid. What if that wasn't enough? I thought to myself now. I'd better do it again, just to make sure. There were only two of us that stayed behind that first evening. Glenda scooted beside me and prayed with me as I again asked Jesus into my heart. The next night, too, I became afraid after hearing Uncle Dave's preaching, and I stayed afterward. Again, Glenda prayed with me.

I remember several nights, after those meetings, when we were lying in our beds in the dark, a few flashlights shining circles around the cabin ceiling. Glenda lay in the bottom bunk of her bed, having just finished reading us devotions. "You girls need to think about where you are in your commitment to Jesus Christ," she said softly. "What if you wake up tomorrow and you're the only one left in the cabin? Jesus said he will come like a thief in the night. What if the Rapture happens and you're the only one left behind?" No one dared to say a word, although one night, after Glenda left for the bath house, I remember one girl quietly asking the rest of us: "Doesn't this feel like a prison?"

That Sunday afternoon, as I climbed the cement steps of the meetinghouse after our closing worship session, my dad's hand reached out to me from the top step, and I lifted my eyes to see him and my mother sitting there, waiting to take us home. The flood of relief I felt when I saw that hand was a feeling I'll never forget.

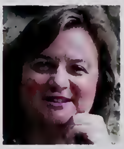
sxc.com

It comes as no surprise, then, after my sixth-grade year, that I was reluctant to sign up for summer camp again. This time another friend asked me to join her for a week at Camp Amigo, a Mennonite camp in Sturgis, Mich. This was my church camp, so I knew I would feel more comfortable. I was older now, too, and figured I could handle the time away from home.

Again, our week was filled with the usual camp activities: water games in the lake, singing crazy songs on the way to the dining hall, the final talent show on Friday night. There was definitely a Christian presence, but it was totally different from what I had experienced earlier. We gathered as campers every night around a giant bonfire to sing camp songs and hear Bible stories, but the atmosphere was warm and inviting, not one full of threats and fear. This is the Jesus that I want to know, I thought then, if only subconsciously. I saw God's love come alive in the way the staff treated us as campers. The time and attention they spent spoke convincingly of the concern and genuine care they had for us as young people. I had no doubt they were available for spiritual conversations, but that happened most often informally, both in our cabin and as we went about our daily activities. As the week came to an end, I can still remember saying goodbye to my counselor, Mary, a dark-haired beauty whose quick laugh and lively spirit had made a great impression upon me. "May God continue to bless your life," she scribbled on the back of our group photo. "Remember, Jesus is the best friend you can ever have."

As I look back on that first camp experience, I realize I was probably too young to be away from home for that long and that my homesickness probably colored my time there. But as the years have gone by, I have come to recognize increasingly that what was going on at that camp was nothing short of abusive. For adults to be instilling fear into the vulnerable hearts and minds of little kids, especially in the name of religion, was not only harmful at the time but surely had negative repercussions for many of those children for years to come. Fortunately for me, my other experiences growing up in the church did not reinforce that negative evangelistic approach. I don't think I ever told my parents much about what happened that week; perhaps I needed to absorb it over time to understand it better. I am now critical of anyone who even talks about the idea of hell with a small child. And I hope that my own daughter can one day experience what I did that second time around.

The time and attention the staff spent spoke convincingly of the concern and genuine care they had for us as young people.



Ann Minter Fetters attends Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kan.

Boldly embody the love of Jesus

by Aaron Kauffman

A call to worship and witness

What is the most important task for the church today, with declining membership, a swiftly changing culture and a world in great need? Could it be something as simple as the love of Jesus? ▶

Aram DiGennaro helps with food distribution during the 2010 drought in Western Kenya.
Debbi DiGennaro, EMM

When I was 17 years old I traveled to Kenya with my high school choir. One afternoon, our tour bus took us through an especially impoverished section of town. Overwhelmed by the sadness I saw on the faces through the bus window, I sent up a naïve but heartfelt prayer: "O Lord, show these people your love somehow." Immediately the following reply resounded in my head and heart, "You show them my love."

I shared this story with a small gathering of young adult seminarians and church leaders one weekend in November 2009. As we took turns telling our spiritual pilgrimages, we noticed that we all shared a love for Jesus, a concern for the church and a desire to be part of God's mission in the world. These commitments have come to form the center of our identity as the Anabaptist Missional Project.

The first thing Jesus teaches about love is that it does not begin with us.

But what do we mean when we say we love Jesus? We live in a society profoundly confused about the meaning of the word love. The word slides off our tongues so easily, expressing our feelings about a spouse or family member, our country, our favorite basketball team or even dark chocolate. We equate love with unconditional acceptance or "doing what comes naturally" when we feel attracted to someone.

Can Christians really use the term love and say anything meaningful at all? Or has it become like an old rubber band, stretched beyond any practical use?

One of my seminary professors urges restraint. He invites preachers to abstain from using the word love for at least six months. "If you can't find some other way of expressing the idea," he suggests, "perhaps you don't really know what it means."

We should probably say the same thing about love that Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon have said about peace and justice: "The church really does not know what these words mean apart from the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth" (*Resident Aliens*, Abingdon Press, 1989). We must look to Jesus to know what love is.

The first thing Jesus teaches about love is that it does not begin with us. Our love for God is always a response to the One who first loved us by taking on the weakness of human flesh and submitting to death on a cross. But the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross say much more than simply, "I accept you the way you are."

Richard Hays makes this point in his award-winning book *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1996): "The biblical story teaches us that God's love cannot be reduced to 'inclusiveness': authentic love calls us to repentance, discipline, sacrifice and transformation." In other words, divine love calls forth a response.

That response begins with an honest assessment of our sinful condition. Love doesn't gloss over sin. The Son of God loved us enough to unmask our addiction to sin and take its consequences on himself. Jesus confronts personal moral failure and social injustice alike, calling everyone to repentance. We can't love God if we refuse to admit our brokenness.

Confession and forgiveness are the first steps of response to God's love. But the journey doesn't end there. Jesus demands radical commitment from his followers, calling us to love God more than money (Matthew 6:24), our family (Matthew 10:37) or even life itself (John 12:25).

We prove our love for God not merely through promises and deeply held sentiments but also through simple obedience to Jesus' commands (John 14:15). Chief among these is to love our neighbors and even our enemies, just as Jesus has loved us: truthfully, joyfully and sacrificially.

Jesus names our vocation of love most clearly in his summary of the Law and the Prophets: "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' " (Matthew 22:37-40).

But there is good reason not to start with this command. We too readily assume we know what it means: "Believe in a benevolent Supreme Being and be nice to people, especially yourself."

If we let Jesus define love, however, it should be clear that this double-love command means something more like this: "Love and serve God with the whole of your being in response to his offer of salvation; and pour out your life for your neighbor (and even your enemy), because that's the kind of love Jesus lived."

When it comes down to it, the love of Jesus is really about worship and witness. We worship the God who first loved us in Jesus Christ. We bear witness to that love by sharing the good news of peace with God, neighbor and creation through Christ. Worship apart from witness is empty, and witness without worship is impotent.

What does it look like when we boldly embody the twofold love of Jesus today?

First of all, we worship with other Christians on a regular basis. For followers of Jesus who love God with all their being, worship is not a commodity we consume but a vocation we assume. We gather with other believers to commune with God through prayer, song, Scripture, preaching, confession, Communion and celebration. Together we cultivate the habits of adoration.

This is especially important to remember as we become an increasingly activist church. I fear we have traded Jesus' invitation to reflect his love for a Messiah complex. We think we're the saviors of the world. Worship reminds us that the fate of the cosmos doesn't depend on us. The Risen Lord rules from heaven, beckoning us to join in his reconciling work.

Secondly, we begin our witness at home and in the congregation. Loving our children as ourselves means winsomely sharing our faith with them. We tell them Bible stories about God's faithfulness and testimonies of God's people across the span of time and geography. We honor their questions and concerns but remind them that their lives are part of a drama whose central actor is the Triune God.

Too often we try to attract our wayward children through inclusion rather than conversion. It's not enough for them to embrace Swiss or Russian Mennonite culture. Anabaptism is most centrally about radical faith in Jesus Christ. Love doesn't substitute potluck dinners for costly discipleship.

Finally, we engage in mission that is specifically Christian. Everything Jesus lovers do, whether meeting human need, caring for creation, denouncing injustice or preaching the gospel, derives from and points toward our Lord. Mission is an integrated endeavor to embody the same love Jesus lived and taught.

We are eager to build homes, feed the hungry or protest militarism. But ask us to share our faith in Christ, and many of us develop momentary aphasia. For those who live by the double-love command, there is no dichotomy between social justice and evangelism.

Jesus issued the double-love command in response to a trick question. "Teacher," probed the Pharisee, "which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus' response is ingenious. The greatest commandment is not one but two: adore God and cherish people. Worship and witness.

Worship apart from witness is empty, and witness without worship is impotent.

The simple elegance of this command does not make it easy to practice. Love demands everything of us. Yet we need not despair that our Lord has given us a charge we are ill-equipped to fulfill. He never expected us to be able to do it on our own. That's why he has sent his earth-shaking, fire-breathing Spirit to embolden and empower us (Acts 2:1-4, 4:31).

As we seek to live the love of Jesus through worship and witness, let us recall the promise of our Messiah: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Aaron Kauffman is a member of Zion Mennonite Church in Broadway, Va., and the global ministries director at Virginia Mennonite Missions. For more about the Anabaptist Missional Project, go to anabaptistmissionalproject.org.

ARE NOT WE
YOUR NEIGHBOUR
DONT MISTREAT
THE FOREIGNER
MATTHEW
DEUTERONO
WE ARE NOT
CRIMINAL
WE ARE HUMAN

The effects of SB 1070

compiled by Gayle Wiens

A young couple in a car had their two little girls asleep in their car seats in the back. The mother and both children are citizens. The father was brought to the United States as a child, attended school here and works here but has no documentation. An officer pulled them over and asked for licenses, registration and insurance. The father could not get a license in Arizona. They gave the officer all the other documentation, and he went back to the patrol car. He returned and told them the father would be jailed, the car would be impounded and a licensed driver would have to pick it up. The mother asked if he could please tell them why he stopped them. He said, "The light on your license plate is out." Then he noticed the kids in the back and shone his light on them. He threw the license and insurance papers at them and shouted, "Don't you know you guys aren't supposed to be driving?" Then he drove off. They sat there a long time, and when they were sure he wasn't coming back, she got out of the car to look. The light on their license plate was on.

Stories about immigration told to members of Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Ariz.

Following are statements from leaders of Unidos de Gracia (the Hispanic church that meets at Trinity Mennonite on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons) during a conversation with Hal Shrader and Ron Faus:

State Senate bill (SB) 1070 is having a great impact on people with whom we minister. When Sheriff Joe visits one of our communities, our people, whether documented or undocumented, are afraid to leave the house. They don't go to work or come to church. We view this as a grave situation, like that faced in earlier times by Jews and blacks … an issue of oppression and dignity.

The following stories were told to a participant at Trinity Mennonite:

I asked someone in the extended family of one of my clients to help me pick up a large outdoor table I had purchased. As we visited, he said he had worked for 30 years for the same employer in Arizona. Now he doesn't know what to do or how to provide for his family. Lots of his friends have left for other states. He doesn't know anyone in Mexico, and all members of his extended family are here.

I was talking to a colleague about the effects of the bill on families I was seeing. She said they had adopted a little boy from Guatemala, thinking that Arizona would be a good place to raise him. Now they're not so sure. She said, Do you think I need to carry his adoption papers everywhere he goes? The answer is yes, since it would be required in SB 1070.

Do you know it is a crime to transport an illegal immigrant, with a fine of $1,000? And they can impound your vehicle for 30 days? Churches, charities and unsuspecting people are not exempt. Many charities have complained they will be unable to do their work, including taking people to doctor's appointments. If you pick up your son or daughter's friends, give someone a ride to church or drive kids to church camp, you may be committing a state crime without knowing it. There are many illegal aliens, including people from Canada, Ireland, England and other European nations who became illegal by staying after their visas expired. How will you know? Will you avoid transporting kids who have brown skin because you are worried about possibly committing a crime? What about people with a foreign accent? Will parents discourage their children from being friends with people of color or those with a foreign accent? Will such actions teach racism to the new generation? When children are ill, can parents take the child to the emergency room without fear of being separated from their children (by being deported)? How many children will die at home because their parents are too afraid? What could we do to increase the crime rate more than prevent honest people from working, going to school or church or going to a doctor?

It is sad that this state is so racist. It's affected me, family members and friends in such a dramatic way. It's hard to say we can't even go out to stores without getting weird looks because of the color of our skin. … Some people were brought here without their consent because they were just kids when they arrived in the United States. They didn't have a choice; their parents brought them here to live a better life. Now, because of their parents' mistakes, they have to pay for it? That's unfair to them. I have family members and friends who are illegal in this country, but I can say they are not criminals. They work hard, pay their taxes and do the dirty work while getting underpaid. I agree we should punish the criminals who are killing or dealing with drugs. But why go after those who are good and work hard to raise their families and give them the opportunity they don't have in Mexico? There should be a reform to the ones that have been here more than 10 years and have no criminal backgrounds. I forgot how human beings can be so ignorant and cruel. It hurt me a lot. I know I prayed hard and asked God to help us. And I thank him and only him for touching that judge's heart and for blocking some of the law. I wish I could ask everyone one simple question. Do you really think God is only taking one particular color to heaven? God said love your neighbors, not hate your neighbors. I was raised in a Christian family and have uncles and aunts who are pastors. I do my best to follow God's Word. I just wish the hate and racism would vanish and we'd all get

Some people were brought here without their consent because they were just kids when they arrived in the United States.

along. I ask you and your friends to pray for those that are in need of God's love and forgiveness.

If people want to boycott Arizona because we are finally putting our foot down to secure our border and save our state endless amounts of money because our federal government is not doing its part, then so be it. It surprises me to hear people want to start mixing church and state only when it is convenient for them. … Those who boycott Arizona do so based on little thought, not reality. They don't deal with the everyday issues we do. They live in a fairy tale world, not like most working, middle-class Americans. They do not live with them as neighbors. [Illegal aliens] bring drugs into our and other states, steal from us and kill innocent people. When they are caught, they serve less time than our own citizens for the same crimes and are let out early and shipped back to Mexico, only to return again. I know of this firsthand. We drain our resources to make sure these people are taken care of, money that should be spent on our own homeless perhaps. … I hesitated to give my opinion on SB 1070 because I believe we are all entitled to our opinion, good or bad. However, I am surprised that the boycott issue has even come up with Mennonite Church USA. People should come because that is what they had planned originally, not based on the opinions of others. How many people will they inconvenience because they decide to boycott and change plans? The rules have always been here but are just now being enforced because our state's economy can no longer afford to continue down this road. It is in the best interests of all of us. I'm not saying they can't come here, but they should come here the legal, proper way. (This is from a letter shared with a Trinity member.)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PERMANENT RESIDENT
Surname
SPECIMEN
Given Name
TEST V
USCIS#
000-000-001
Category
RE8
Country of Birth
Utopia
Date of Birth
01 JAN 1920
Sex
F
Card Expires:
08/21/07
Resident Since:
08/21/07
Test V. Specimen

www.uscis.gov

Those who boycott Arizona do so based on little thought, not reality.

I know a guy who was born and grew up in Mexico. His parents were U.S. citizens. He worked in the United States, driving a truck all over the country. Once he had a load to take to Vancouver, British Columbia. He had a U.S. license, but officials wouldn't let him back into the United States, and Canadian officials detained him. After a short time, they said to him, "Why don't you just give up your Mexican citizenship and become a Canadian citizen? Then you could get a visa to the United States." He did this. He was young, and overstayed the visa in the United States but was afraid to apply for U.S. citizenship for fear of being deported. He has been here illegally for 27 years, and if he gets stopped, he will be deported to Canada.

I work with a family that was in the process of moving back to Mexico. The father and uncle went back to Mexico to find a place to live and get it ready. While they were there, they were shot and killed. The mother and daughter (13 years old) are still here and have nowhere to go. There is nothing to go back to in Mexico. They are dealing with a lot of fear and trauma but are afraid to come in for counseling for the daughter (a citizen) because they are afraid of being separated. I have many clients now who are too afraid to come in. Many of these clients are citizens. The problem is that one or both of the parents are not. My caseload used to be full, with a long list of those waiting for a bilingual counselor. Now only 40 percent of my clients are Hispanic.

SB 1070 was a welcome relief to me, since my politics are very conservative. If people want to live in this country, they need to come in legally, apply for citizenship and embrace America. If they are not legal, they need to go back to Mexico. I felt strongly about these beliefs and never questioned them until last week. My beliefs were shaken when I met a face in the crowd, which in this case happened to be two young Hispanic girls. They came to Glencroft to do community service to meet the requirements of their honor society.

These girls were assigned the responsibility of helping assemble 120 book bags with school supplies. This takes great attention to detail, since each bag is prepared for the gender and grade level of the child. These girls were amazing and paid attention to every detail. Maylea left after a few hours, since her high school had asked her to spend the day working as a mentor to incoming freshmen. This left Myra and me to work together. During this time it became evident we would need more supplies. I suggested lunch before our shopping trip. During lunch, I asked Myra if she was excited about her senior year in high school and what she planned after graduation. She explained she carries a 4.0 grade point average and would love to become a sports medicine doctor. I asked her about her family. She said her father was in prison and that her mother supports the four children by cleaning houses. This has been hard in recent months since she only has four houses to clean instead of the eight she had previously. Myra explained that she could not get a job because she has no social security number, and neither does her sister Maylea. They are both in the country illegally, as is their mother. The younger sister and brother are legal because they were born here. Myra was 1-year-old when she came to Arizona, and Maylea was a month old. Neither has ties to Mexico; they are Americans who, if forced to return, probably would have to drop out of school. Both girls speak Spanish but do not write it, so they would be at a distinct disadvantage in a Spanish school system.

Suddenly I felt torn. The issue was not so black and white. Myra shared with me the fear they face daily and how her sister Maylea has nightmares they will be rounded up and sent back to Mexico. She sees the family being torn apart, since the two younger children would probably stay in Arizona.

This fear was not one sided, as I, too, suddenly became fearful. I was driving with an illegal person, a crime in Arizona. What if I were stopped? Would I go to jail? Would Myra be sent back to Mexico? It turned what should have been a joyous shopping trip into a nightmare. Suddenly I was reminded of the Holocaust and had the desire to hide Myra, Maylea and her mother in my basement or attic until proper documentation could be obtained, though this was not practical for many reasons, the biggest being Arizona has no basements or attics.

SB 1070 has two sides. For many years we chose to look the other way when having undocumented workers in our country? They were here in the good times to clean our houses, work as nannies for our children and maintain our yards. Now times are harder, the budget is tighter and there is new awareness because of escalading violence and crime. Many of these individuals are no longer welcome in our country.

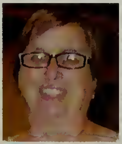
There are many questions. How do we care for those who have been here for many years, eliminate the criminal and violent elements and stop the flow of new illegals from coming into this country? The problem is multifaceted, and the solution needs to be the same. There are many faces in the crowd. How do we provide a humane, practical and fair approach? Maybe we look to our potential leaders and cast our votes for those willing to work for a solution that addresses all the faces in the crowd.

I was driving with an illegal person, a crime in Arizona. What if I were stopped? Would I go to jail? Would Myra be sent back to Mexico?

My purpose in sharing these stories is to help us see this complex issue from many perspectives. There are areas of immigration about which many of us agree. Here are a few:

- Immigration policy in the United States is not working and needs to be changed.
- Immigration policy is complex, and no single solution will address all concerns.
- People of any legal status who commit crimes should be tried and punished accordingly.
- All human beings should be treated humanely and fairly.
- Because of the economic differences between the United States and Mexico, some limitation on immigration will need to be made.
- There needs to be a way to apply for a work permit (green card), legal status and citizenship with a clearly defined process and timelines that are reasonable. People who have been in the United States for years should be able to pursue legal status without fear of immediate deportation (otherwise no one can apply).
- U.S. Immigration policy changes based on the employment needs at various times in history.
- Anti-immigrant sentiment becomes more mainstream when people feel threatened economically.
- Fear and harassment is not the way to deal with human problems.
- There is a long history of the use of migrant farm workers and other undocumented workers in the United States.
- God is concerned about the oppressed and about injustice in our society and expects his children to be his hands and feet in the world.

May God lead and guide us as we seek to work for peace, justice and fairness for all people.



Gayle Wiens is a member of Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Ariz.

A study of 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

The **church** and the message of peace

by Gilberto Flores

A perspective

The two letters of the apostle Paul to the Corinthian church were written at a time of effervescent evangelizing, with conflicts accompanying this expansion. Like all first-generation churches, the church at Corinth was made up mostly of Hellenistic Judeans (see *Social Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* by Bruce Malina). Many arguments found in the book of Acts and in the apostolic letters happened between Palestinian Judeans and exiled or emigrated Judeans who lived in a culturally Greek world and were known as Hellenists. As happened in Antioch, the Gentiles had converted to faith in Jesus of Nazareth, adding another cultural component to the church.

In such a context, the likelihood of conflict increases. Combine a diverse racial-ethnic mix finding their meeting point in a religious movement founded on the person and work of a rabbi named Jesus and the ideological elements specific to a culture in which politics, religion and kinship were one and the same, and there will no doubt be conflict and controversy. These controversies came to be important because they contributed to the emergence of theological affirmations that shaped the further development of the church and its reason to exist in the world.

Consequences of the death of Christ

In verses 14-15, the apostle refers to a historical event that is fundamental to the Christian faith: the death of Jesus of Nazareth, which Paul explains was of universal significance:

a. “One has died for all” (v. 14), “And he died for all” (v. 15).

b. “Therefore, all have died” (v. 14).

c. “And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (v. 15).

These affirmations, although extremely condensed, are one of the best summaries of the redemption and its results. And they reflect a radical change in Paul’s understanding of Jesus and his messianism. The effects of the death of Christ on the believer are clear and allow us to understand the full extent of 2 Corinthians 5:16-17: Transformed by the death of Christ, the disciples come to a new knowledge that is no longer “knowledge according to the flesh.”

Repeatedly after his Damascus Road experience, Paul states his conviction that his former opinions about Jesus and his disciples lacked substance. What he believed is no longer valid. Paul’s experience strengthened his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. The disciples of Jesus are God’s new human creation (v. 18, 19). As a result, Paul acknowledges his change of perspective and feels compelled to proclaim that in his own life the old things have passed away, replaced by a new human being.

Unwavering in his conviction, he urges the Corinthians to remember that he has not closed his heart to them: “I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also” (2 Corinthians 6:11-13). It is the voice of an agent of change, a passionate witness who wants to be faithful to the message of peace.

Verses 16-17 begin with the conjunction hōste (“therefore”), which Paul uses to name the two consequences of the death of Christ. First, Paul has come to two conclusions about his own death and life (v. 14): he has died, and at the same time he has a new life; therefore, the worldly point of view that used to rule him is gone, corresponding with the ending of Jesus’ earthly life. What is clear is the new creation of God. Paul’s preconceptions about Jesus—whom he believed was acting out of a misguided messianic claim and whose followers he thought should be destroyed (Acts 9:1, 2; 26:9-11)—were erroneous.

The differences or racial-ethnic separations and their resulting prejudices—between Judeans of Palestine and Hellenistic Judeans, for example, or between Jews and Gentiles—have become secondary or even insignificant issues.

Paul says that he has stopped making superficial judgments about people (v. 16). Because of this change he does not see anyone on the basis of external appearance or nationality. He has centered his Christian conduct on paying attention to the spiritual condition of those he encounters (v. 17). Thus, the differences or racial-ethnic separations and their resulting prejudices—between Judeans of Palestine and Hellenistic Judeans, for example, or between Jews and Gentiles—have become secondary or even insignificant issues (Romans 2:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13; Galatians 3:28; 6:10; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Second, Paul says that people and all human events must be viewed in the light of this new creation in Christ. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (v. 17). Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, whenever a person comes to be part of the body of Christ by faith, a creative act of God—a new creation—has happened. As a result of this new creation an old system of relationships disappears (parēlthen, aoristo), and in its place a new one is established (gegonen, perfect).

So, anyone who believes in Christ—whether Gentile, Jew, Hellenist, Samaritan, woman, slave or free—is a brother or sister, because he or she “is in Christ.” The case is different with those who do not believe in Christ, because they “are without Christ." The church is the congregation of a new people called to live in the fullness of life, which is inherent to the relationship they now have with the Lord of Life. This change in relationship signifies a change of attitude toward Christ and others. It is a conversion connected to a new understanding based on the cross and the passion of Christ. "For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but new creation is everything! As for those who follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:15-16 NRSV).

> Ambassadors who act in the name of Christ proclaim reconciliation that is already a benefit achieved by Christ.

From where does this blessing come? In verses 18 and 19 we are told that all things come from God. He is the one who reconciles people to himself through his Son. The verb "to reconcile" and the noun "reconciliation" are rare in Paul's writings. They occur 10 times in all his letters; five of these references are in the passage we are studying, with the special purpose of naming the act of reconciliation between God and humans.

Reconciliation is not a future act; it is something that can be achieved right now. Reconciliation is not a polite way of ignoring or reducing hostility; in fact, it is a complete and effective removal of all hostilities (see 2 Corinthians in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* by Murray Harris). Also note the discontinuity existing between these two different orders—the old and the new. It indicates the need to be aware of the presence of the new and of its absence. Perfection continues to perfect itself.

The disciples as peacemakers

Christ is the agent of God, who reconciles (v. 19). The disciples are called to proclaim that victory by acting as "the aroma of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15, 16) and becoming, like their Lord, agents of reconciliation who proclaim peace (v. 19b). Ambassadors who act in the name of Christ proclaim reconciliation that is already a benefit achieved by Christ.

This new humanity is the one who must tell the world: "We entreat you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God" (v. 20). This call is the way God establishes the connection between the objective work of reconciliation and its internalization or subjective appropriation. Because reconciliation is an act of removing hostility, only by being reconciled can one discover the benefit and inner joy of being reconciled. The disciples proclaim reconciliation, are makers of reconciliation and conduct themselves as reconciled people. Like their Lord, they are peacemakers—individually and corporately.

Making a pastoral connection

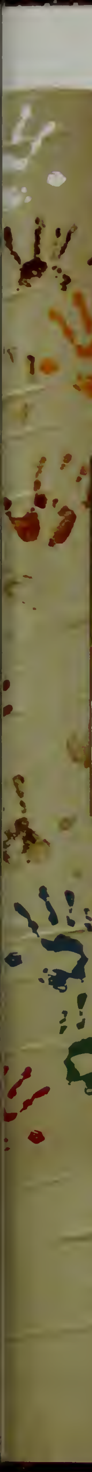
The study of this passage is captivating; the missional possibilities it contains are immense. It motivates us to rethink the commitment and the role of the church today. It raises questions about the relevance of the Mennonite church in the world. It helps us identify the temptations of generic Christianity and of taking care of the status quo that promotes passive accommodation. It puts us on guard against the secular ideal of a "melting pot" that hides hostilities rather than resolving them.

It exhorts us to avoid seeing and judging the world, events and people "according to the flesh" and neglecting the point that through the cross of Christ God calls us and invites us to true reconciliation. It clarifies the nature of community as witness of the kingdom of God and places the community as an ambassador of reconciliation and maker of peace. It encourages our hope for a new church—antiracist, just and supportive. The word is clear and so is the request: "Open wide your hearts" (6: 12b).

Gilberto Flores is associate conference minister for Western District Conference. He works from Cedar Hill, Texas, and is a member of First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. He formerly served as director of denominational ministry and missional church advancement for Mennonite Church USA.

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

This is the final of four Bible studies on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 in The Mennonite *leading up to Pittsburgh 2011, the next Mennonite C29hurch USA biennial convention, to be held July 4-9 in downtown Pittsburgh. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by this text and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers.*



10 ways to affirm weekday ministers

How **work-friendly** is your **church**?

by Wally Kroeker

Churches expand God's reach when they celebrate the Monday-to-Friday activities of their members. The church can breathe new life into daily work—even into whole careers—by helping members reclaim the work week for God. Here are some ideas to suggest to your pastor and worship planners to help make your church a work-friendly zone.

1. Map your city. Get a map of your community and mount it on a bulletin board. Use colored pushpins to show where members work (or where retired members used to work). You'll have a visual display of your congregation's Monday-to-Friday outreach.

2. Invite your pastor to drop in for coffee break or brown-bag lunch at your plant or office. Encourage a few friends to do the same. Your pastor will gain valuable insights into the part of life where you spend a lot of your time.

3. Volunteer to organize a series of workplace testimonies in which selected members explain "How I connect Sunday and Monday." Have them talk about their job, the day-to-day issues they face and how their faith helps them witness while they work.

4. Many churches commission people for mission work or voluntary service. Why not encourage your church to do the same for Theresa the Teacher or Arthur the Accountant.

5. Plan a Sunday school elective on the theme of work. Use resources such as *Faith Dilemmas for Marketplace Christians* (Wipf & Stock), which is designed for a 13-week quarter. You'll find that many people are energized to talk about their work in the context of the church.

6. If you have a church newsletter, suggest that it carry anecdotes featuring members' jobs and the challenges they face Monday to Friday.

7. Work strikes a responsive chord in worship (and not just on Labor Day weekend). Here's a suggestion for your planners: Ask members to show up some Sunday wearing their usual work garb to illustrate the diverse cultures the congregation penetrates every week. Imagine the sight as electricians, nurses, mechanics, firefighters, medical technicians, janitors, waitstaff and office workers sport their uniforms.

8. Offer to arrange a "tools of the trade" worship display to showcase goods and services put forth by members during the week.

9. Suggest a special benediction to signal that the work week is an important part of the Christian life. Sample: "Sisters and brothers in Christ, we are *not* dismissed; we are *not* just free to go—Christ sends us. Go forth into the world in the power of the Spirit; go to help and heal in all that you do."

10. Post a sign over the main exit door that says "Service Entrance." But post it on the inside, not the outside. That way it's the last thing worshipers see as they leave, reminding them that they are heading out into the world to spend the next week as ministers.

Wally Kroeker, Winnipeg, is director of publications for Mennonite Economic Development Associates, which works in 40-plus countries to provide business solutions to poverty.

On participating in being God's agent for change through prayer

THE EARTH handle with prayer

by Jan Johnson

As the plane descended that Saturday evening in 2003, I watched the forest fires raging over the place on the planet I call home: southern California. Fire after fire lined the eastern corridor to Los Angeles. Once home, I could see the sky lit up and the hills above us on fire. When the winds picked up the next morning, firefighters knocked on our door and told us to pack up to be ready to leave. But the fire receded and didn't come back, so we went wandering toward the hills to gaze at it more closely. That's when I did something odd. I shut my eyes and held up my hand toward the direction I wanted the wind to blow so that the fire would bypass our neighborhood and farther move back into the hills. My daughter's friend quizzed me, "What are you doing?" With hesitant uncertainty, I offered, "Uh … I'm praying for the wind to shift."

At the time, I thought that was odd. But now I'd probably say with resolve, "Peace, be still."

What has changed is that my fledgling ideas about praying for our planet, its forces and our part in this drama have been nurtured by a not-so-ancient saint, Agnes Sanford (1897-1982), author of *The Healing Light and Creation Waits.* Living in similar circumstances along Los Angeles' eastern corridor some years earlier, she prayed, "Hear me, wind. … You are to swing around now and blow from the west, bringing in mist and rain from the sea. Come now." And it did.

Partners not puppets

I knew I'd found a pilgrim ahead of me on this journey when I read about how Sanford (an Episcopal priest's wife well-known for her teaching about prayer) prayed about Southern California's other natural disasters, earthquakes. According to Sanford, God's creation mandate for humans is to be co-laborers—not robots or mere spectators. God could work wonders without anyone's help, but God likes working with us as a team: "partners, rather than merely puppets." Part of our labor is caring for the earth as "God's agents upon this Earth."

This responsibility as God's agents goes against contemporary tendencies to either disregard creation or to manipulate it for our own purposes. For Jesus to be the Son of God meant showing self-giving, even self-emptying love; for me to be a child of God means showing self-giving, even self-emptying love instead of selfish exploitation. Can I let go of my manipulative ways, on the one hand, but also my unthinking, indifferent ways ("I'm too busy to recycle") to be one with God enough to join God in tenderly caring for creation?

Hearing the groaning of the Earth

As God's agents on earth, we are like estate managers so it behooves us to learn how to be more responsible and vigilant in caring for the Earth. One way we take responsibility is by praying for the Earth. While being partners in reconciliation may sound grand, we can be comforted that Sanford advised people to start small in all the ways of healing prayer. Schooled in these ideas as another round of fires came near our home, I asked God how to start small. The smallest of the nine fires was about 10 miles from me, so I began there. It went out in a day, but then it was a small fire. I'm not sure my prayers made a difference in the fire, but I loved participating in the gentle management of creation.

Then I received an email from a friend living in a distant community surrounded on three sides by fire. Would I pray? I focused on that community, and again it was spared (but a lot of people were praying for that one). I kept all this to myself, following another piece of wisdom Sanford offers: "There is often more power in prayer when we do not tell anyone our objective."

With new awareness in my eyes and ears, I seem to see and hear the groaning of the Earth (Romans 8:19-23) as we go through a severe drought in southern California. This has caused coyotes and deer and rattlesnakes to appear on our streets and front lawns, desperately looking for water. I pray for unexpected rain to help these creatures. After a few days of praying this way, I found myself slightly annoyed by slow traffic on the freeway because there was unexpected rain. So I thanked God for the prayed-for but unexpected rain that inconvenienced me but helped the Earth and its creatures.

Some people prefer not to pray about things because if things don't come out perfectly it will look like God has failed. We don't pray in order to protect God's reputation (as if God needs me to do this). People even ask, Where is God? But when homes and even lives are destroyed, I am still God's agent. God is there because I'm there. God is a helper in these situations and invites my human mind and body to join by helping too, donating time and money.

Some people prefer not to pray about things because if things don't come out perfectly it will look like God has failed.

I'm helped by Sanford's counsel that the prayer of faith is one of expectancy. When facing a natural disaster or encountering intimidating creatures of the Earth, we tend to be afraid or worry or even become numb. But she insists these responses contradict the reality of our expectant faith: "The prayer that we see in our minds [fear, worry, numbness] takes precedence over the prayer [of faith] and renders it of no avail." For me this means believing that God's love and light in the universe can for this moment be focused on this creature or natural force in front of me. It's at least being willing to ask. Besides, once we've participated in being God's agent a few times, we love being a part of what God is doing and would never sit on the sidelines again.

With Earth prayers, for example, she asked God if she might pray that a certain brewing calamity be averted, but "this prayer was too great for me. 'May I pray for it to be minimized?' I asked, and quite distinctly I heard, 'Yes.' " So she prayed for three days, and the ensuing catastrophe was much less than expected.

Jan Johnson is the author of 20 books and many magazine articles (see www.JanJohnson.org). Also a speaker and spiritual director, she lives in Simi Valley, Calif.

Learning and looking forward

Ed Diller is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

During the past four years, I have felt a special calling to help the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and staff focus on our vision (see below) and our purpose of becoming a missional church at all levels. However, when I first agreed to accept the moderator-elect position, I did not understand the words "missional church" or anticipate how these words would shape my thoughts and actions during my term of service.

As a lay person, I admit I do not fully grasp the nuances of missional church theology. After learning from others, I have embraced five points as the foundation for my missional church thinking:

- God sent Jesus to the whole world.
- God is already active in and throughout the world.
- The congregation is God's primary agent and strategy of mission.
- We are a sent people, not just a sending people.
- Participating in God's mission is not a program of the church but the center of all that we do.

These concepts focus our efforts across all levels of our church toward the following:

- equipping and encouraging individual church members to be people through whom God's healing and hope flow to the world;
- supporting congregational leaders as they equip every member to be engaged in God's work in the world;
- discerning together God's desires for us as we join in the transforming work of Jesus in the world;
- worshiping together in the Spirit, seeking the grace, joy and peace of God that come from participating in Christian community.

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

As Pittsburgh 2011 (our denomination's next biennial convention) approaches, we hope you will experience how these missional-church-inspired efforts are shaping our work and will influence the work of the delegates at convention. Both before and at the convention, you will hear about how various groups and people within the church are working to clarify their vision and align their activities based on missional theology. The experience of Mennonite Church Canada in building capacity for working on difficult theological issues will continue to influence us as we discern the nature of Mennonite Church USA and of God's desires for us.

At Pittsburgh, the table groups, the Conversation Room (see www.themennonite.org/issues/13-11/articles/Conversation_Room_at_Pittsburgh_2011) and the open-mic times will provide us with opportunities to speak with each other in loving, personal ways about our understanding of Scripture and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Members of the majority culture attending the convention will experience new ways of being the church together in anticipation of the day when all tribes, peoples, languages and nations join together in worshiping the Lamb as one body (Revelation 7:9). Finally, we hope delegates will adopt the so-called Pittsburgh Experiment, through which we will seek to discern together a purposeful plan for our church for the next two years (see www.themennonite.org/issues/14-4/articles/Pittsburgh_Experiment_may_mean_few_resolutions). In all of these things, we trust that delegates will be open to working together in new ways towards the same vision that has united us since its adoption in 1995.

It is clear we are asking for significant commitment and openness from our people across Mennonite Church USA. While all of us are painfully aware of our own limitations and the limitations of our church, our leadership group is confident that with the help of God, Mennonite Church USA can be fully engaged in God's activities in being reconciled to the world and that the Pittsburgh 2011 gathering can be a step toward that end.

In closing, I want you to know that while the commitment required to serve as your moderator has been significant, filling that role has been a wonderful, life-changing experience. I have had the opportunity to observe our church at its best (as well as during less auspicious times). In each of those circumstances I have been inspired by the faith, devotion and commitment of our people to being faithful followers of Christ. I am confident in our church—in the leadership that has been called to service—and in the knowledge that together our church at every level will find ways to allow God's healing and hope to flow through us to the world. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. TM

The cloud of witnesses locks in

When we're young, we do younger-person things and when older we do older-person things. My early writings pondered young marriage, babies, children growing. More recently I've written my way through the decline and then death of both my parents. There is more to life than aging and death, and the day will come again to celebrate that. Yet for now I find the death of one more major mentor producing this column's focus on being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, as Hebrews 12:1 so memorably puts it.

A recent death was of key mentor Paul M. Schrock (see page 55). Paul taught me publishing. In the 1990s, with heavy heart, he downsized me from a financially distressed Herald Press. But he wrapped my termination in the ongoing support that contributed to my being able to own my own publishing company after leaving Herald Press. Then his support contributed to my becoming a seminary dean. But on April 18, after a fall in a library, working among the books he loved, he was gone.

The cloud of witnesses is a way of celebrating that we're all in this together.

As I mourned his departure amid gratitude for ways he had blessed me, his moving on intertwined with my parents' departure. And it dawned on me that without intending to, I was visualizing Paul along with my parents and other departed loved ones in a kind of cloud, a cloud of those who had by faith "run with perseverance the race marked out" for them (Hebrews 12:1), a cloud of those who were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show they are looking for a country of their own, longing for a better country—a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:13-16 NIV).

We may each experience having a famous idea, long known, lock in so personally it seems that only now do we get it. Last week was my time to feel "cloud of witnesses" locking in. I don't mean that I perfectly grasp Hebrews, whose writer might find my appropriation unrecognizable, but simply that the image has now become for me particularly powerful.

We do, if we feel the longing for that better country, seek to run our race toward it. As Hebrews puts it, we welcome the things promised from a distance, never fully experiencing them here. So there is always sorrow in the race, the sorrow of a destination not fully reached, a yearning not wholly fulfilled.

I suspect in addition to the grief of losing physical contact with those we love, our sorrow at funerals comes from awareness that neither the one we memorialize nor we ourselves when our time comes get as far as they and we would wish. Along with the here-were-the-wonderful-achievements parts, there are always the didn't-get-there parts we wistfully ache for.

But precisely in regret over the country not reached emerges the power of the cloud of witnesses image. These witnesses, though within a mystery we can't fully know, are now nearer that country. They become the cloud of those who know how impossible it is to get all the way to God's country in this life yet whose vision of it far off shaped their lives on the way toward it. Then beyond their earthly race they've become our cheerleaders, these who have been there but have now handed us the baton with which to race on as faithfully and far as we can amid our own longings, which we also will not entirely satisfy.

A gift of many memorial services is the power to peel back the veil between those who have raced beyond death and those still racing here. At memorial services the barriers between those living and those dead, those past and those present, we as living beings versus the dead ones we will someday at our own funerals be, fade away. For precious minutes we live in God's time, in God's way of experiencing, as those by the finish line and those still racing toward it intertwine.

The cloud of witnesses is a way of celebrating that we're all in this together, we who have run the race and we who run on, as cheerleaders and runners seek to mingle in that most real of families, God's family—a family larger even than the categories of alive and dead in a country where we welcome the things long promised. TM

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., and Harrisonburg, Va., is publisher of Cascadia Publishing House, LLC., and dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

Compassion for everyone

Ronald Rich is a member of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio.

Many writers, not only Christians, are calling for compassion for less-fortunate people, often especially immigrants. They are right on this. Limiting the call, in effect, however, to any single group in any one era has the seeds of massive disasters. Others who are affected right now include low-wage workers, border residents and all of us facing more crowded roads, hospitals, schools, as well as more depleted sources of water, farm land, living space, mines, waste dumps and so on. This has been noted before, but comments that ignore these problems keep coming. We either have compassion for everyone on a future crowded and depleted Earth, or we show amazing short-sightedness, and self-centeredness can hit us all.

We either have compassion for everyone on a future crowded and depleted Earth, or we show amazing short-sightedness.

The related absolutely essential point is to let the Earth's finitude sink in and act on it. Now, at least intellectually, we all know of its roughly spherical shape and therefore limited size, but many of us, eager to show our generous hospitality, clearly imply that we dare not mention finiteness. No way, however, can we actually continue as in the past, when there was enough space for continued growth for us humans. I'd much rather write about the many fantastic features of this, God's universe, but first we simply must preserve our part of it for others.

One crucial point is that both crowding into finite space and the depletion of finite resources of all kinds have already caused many wars and will evidently cause more catastrophic ones and more numerous ones before long. Pacifists of any kind dare not ignore this; yet, sorry to say, we often do just that, putting immediate commendable hospitality above all else.

Some have claimed that it doesn't matter environmentally whether people stay in Mexico, for example, or come here. This is clearly false. People come here for a higher standard of living, and this means more consumption. This is entirely understandable, yet honesty demands recognition of the facts in any true debate. All of us, including the earlier Americans, are immigrants or their descendants, but surely we know that new circumstances demand new responses.

The welfare of our own grandchildren, and certainly of the immigrants' grandchildren, too, must take a big place in our further discussion if we mean to be honest and truly compassionate. We need more compassion, not less. Well then, critics ask, what to do? Several comments are called for.

I am no expert on exactly which cultural and legal changes to encourage here and elsewhere. Before we go further, however, we must acknowledge the whole problem, including Nature's limits. If we should challenge "our own people" first, we need to begin with fellow believers, as Jesus did, rather than with our more distant rulers. Then, if we can work together, let us look at just one legal point now. No Scripture requires that a temporary residence chosen for birth also be the permanent site of citizenship. If the Constitution is a "living document," let it recognize this. To deny that current law is a "magnet" for breaking other laws is frankly not honest.

There must also be no prohibition whatever, for "political correctness" or otherwise, on urging each involved country to change some policies and customs. We may differ at times from Leonard Pitts Jr.'s columns, but regret with him when we can "no longer tell ... conventional wisdom from actual wisdom" in any argument.

The charge of racism has been disproved elsewhere and is therefore not refuted here again, despite the repetition of the accusation. That label is not always false but is often abused in order to make even thoughtful dissidents cower and to censor, squelch and stifle honest discussion. The various well-known religious extremists and governments are not alone in this. Practicing Christians will, without being begged, love and respect our/their (rhetorical) enemies, not only our rulers' enemies.

Please, then, let's open up, truly care about everyone and everyone's environment and begin to work hard together on badly needed real solutions. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

García to become new MWC executive secretary

First Mennonite World Conference appointee from the global South

For the first time, a leader from the global South will become the general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

On May 4, the MWC Executive Committee formally appointed César García of Bogotá, Colombia, as general secretary-elect, to succeed Larry Miller on Jan. 1, 2012.

"I am excited about the possibility of serving in the leadership of MWC with the purpose of praying, thinking and acting as part of Christ's global church," García said, following his acceptance of the call. "God is glorified when the multicultural interdependency of his church is evidenced in our way of doing theology, practicing ecclesiology and bearing Christian witness in the world."

The appointment was one of the first actions taken at MWC Executive Committee's annual meeting, held this year in Taipei, Taiwan, May 4-11.

"The affirmation of Cesar's candidacy is a historical moment for us," said Danisa Ndlovu, MWC president. "It is a recognition of our positive integration as a community of faith as we see the global South offering its richness to the global North."

Also included in the Executive Committee action was the plan to move the location of the MWC head office from Strasbourg, France, to Bogotá. García will join MWC staff in August for a period of transition with Miller.

García, who was chair of the Iglesias Hermanos Menonitas de Colombia (Mennonite Brethren Churches of Colombia) from 2002 to 2008, is currently completing master's studies at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific Biblical Seminary.

God is glorified when the multicultural interdependency of his church is evidenced in our way of doing theology, practicing ecclesiology and bearing Christian witness—César García

He also serves as secretary of the MWC Mission Commission and as a member of MWC's task force on the creation of a new network of service ministries. In addition, he has been active in inter-Anabaptist and ecumenical endeavours in Colombia.

According to García, 39, the Colombian church and his local congregation, Iglesia HM Torre Fuerte (Strong Tower MB Church) in Bogotá, had sent him to California for studies in order to return and serve in Colombia, where he has been a church planter, pastor and professor of Bible and theology.

When the MWC leadership nominated him as a candidate in January 2010, García submitted the matter to an intense process of discernment with Colombian church leaders and with close church friends in Fresno. The process ended in unanimous and enthusiastic support.

"The fact that many people were involved in different interviews," said García, "encouraged us to trust God's leadership and gave us the courage to accept this calling."

He added that his commitment to the Colombian church continues but in the context of this broader appointment. The location of the office in Colombia will allow him to maintain regular contact with the church there.

García is married to Sandra Báez, who is also completing studies in Fresno. They have two teenage daughters, María and Paula.—*Byron Rempel-Burkholder of Mennonite World Conference*

Core market manager

Everence (formerly MMA) is seeking a core market manager to provide leadership of all Everence activities within the Newton, Kan., area market. Responsible for developing the market so individuals and organizations have the opportunity to integrate their faith with their financial decisions. Qualified candidates will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience (MBA preferred); proven management experience, preferably in delivery of financial services; proven negotiation skills; and significant sales and distribution experience.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; e-mail: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Menno Village is refuge for quake evacuees

Japanese farmers may lose 18-generation-old farm because of contamination.

Just Peace International

Meiko (center left) and Yoshiki (center right) Kanno, who have taken refuge at Menno Village in northern Japan, are in danger of losing their farm, which has been in the family for 18 generations.

Signs of spring offer hope in disaster-stricken Japan. Blooming flowers and chirping birds signal nature's restorative promise, but those signs are also reminders of an uncertain future as contamination from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant spreads through soil and air.

About 450 miles north, outside the danger zone where, on March 11, a massive, 9.0-magnitude earthquake unleashed a deadly tsunami that slammed the nuclear plant, Ray Epp and Akiko Aratani, Mennonite Mission Network associates and directors of Menno Village, are among those who are offering neighborly help. The husband and wife team have made Menno Village, a Christian community involved in agriculture and education, available as a temporary home for evacuees.

"People have been wondering, 'What could we do to help?'" Epp said via phone last month. "We could offer children a safe place to be. We can provide them with goods."

But evacuees have not come in droves, as perhaps refugees fleeing a war zone might, Epp said. There haven't been many takers despite the alarming threat.

"Many people [near the epicenter] are waiting," Epp said. "They don't want to leave until they have closure."

The March 11 earthquake and tsunami have left nearly 28,000 dead or missing. The epicenter of the quake was near the east coast of Honshu in the country's northeast, and the destruction stretched along the coast more than 230 miles south to Tokyo and beyond. Powerful aftershocks have continued and added to the devastation, though cleanup and relief efforts are underway.

The government recently made it illegal to enter a 12-mile evacuation zone near the Fukushima nuclear plant. According to published reports, nearly 80,000 area residents have been affected. Many evacuees are living in gymnasiums in hopes of returning home sooner rather than later.

Epp said many of these residents are seniors who have farmed their entire lives. Meanwhile, many young people had moved away over the decades in search of jobs, as government policies emphasized modernization and urban living. The plant was built to serve the power needs of Tokyo's urbanites. It was also intended to bring jobs to the rural areas. Now it has potentially made the area uninhabitable.

Among the younger generation that continues to farm but is considering evacuating are Yoshiki Kanno and Meiko, his wife, of Iitate Village, which is about 21 miles from the Fukushima power plant. Four months ago, the Kannos paid a visit to Menno Village to renew friendships dating back to when Yoshiki Kanno studied at Rakuno Gakuen University, where Epp and Aratani teach. They were not planning on returning so soon.

"God brought us back here this time," Yoshiki told Epp as he picked them up at the train station.

"I learned from the newspaper that the soil in our village is contaminated with high levels of the radioactive particle cesium, and we were very worried that it takes a long time to weaken the radiation because we are farmers with cattle and farmland," wrote Meiko last month via e-mail through a translator.

When the nuclear reactor blew, the wind was blowing in the direction of the Kannos' town. Rain and snow carried radiation to their land.

At Menno Village, Epp escorted the Kannos and introduced them to townspeople in the surrounding area. They attended a local meeting where they shared their plight and stories of others surviving in and near the disaster area. The Kannos are 18th-generation farmers and, like many in their village, they do not want to leave their homeland.

"No one yet knows how long we could stay in the (Iitate) village or if we have to leave," Meiko wrote. "We all hope to continue to farm in the village, but if we have to leave for a long time, we think we have to find a place to farm during that period. ... We are very uneasy, but we will have to make a choice with a hope for our future and for our children."—*Wil LaVeist of MMN*

Colombians find safety in Ecuador

Young adult MMN worker visits with family who lost farm to FARC.

Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

Former Colombian Mennonite worker in Ecuador Liliana Ocampo (third from right) admires some of art therapy projects made by Lucía* and her children in the Quito Mennonite Church's home for Colombian refugees. Ocampo, who served in the Colombian refugee program at the church, tutored the children until they were able to find a place in a Quito school, while also doing art therapy, like sewing the three little peluches (stuffed dolls).

Two months ago, Carlos and Maria* arrived in Ecuador with their son, daughter and nephew. During their first week in Quito, while seeking help in their difficult transition from a rural farm in Colombia to the capital city of neighboring Ecuador, they happened upon the Mennonite church.

When Carlos and Maria expressed interest in having me visit their home in a nearby small town, where they had moved because of cheaper rent, I jumped at the chance to hear their story. After a two-hour bus ride a week later, I found myself at their doorstep. Their warm faces were a happy contrast to their windowless, empty "new" house. As they welcomed me into their living space, we sat down on their only furnishings, two thin mats and two blankets, which covered the damp floor. These were gifts from the Mennonite church in Quito, where the five members of their family had found refuge after spending a week sleeping on scraps of cardboard. The stained, wet walls were sparsely decorated by a few pencil drawings—depictions of the farm in Colombia that Maria had inherited from her parents. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC, a guerrilla group involved in countless kidnappings and acts of violence) had forcefully taken the farm from Carlos and Maria's family just weeks before.

Carlos and Maria described how members of FARC accused the family of supporting the opposition paramilitary groups. After death threats and the attempted murder of Carlos, the family decided there was no other choice but to leave their beloved farm behind and flee to Ecuador. Thinking they could leave their problems in Colombia, the family had high hopes of a better life in Ecuador. However, a week into their time in Ecuador, they had been accused by an Ecuadorian store owner of stealing. They felt targeted because of their dark skin and Colombian accent. As the police interrogated and searched them, their daughter began to cry, thinking that the Ecuadorian police were members of FARC, who were going to take her father away.

A week later, when I called Carlos and Maria to follow up on their situation and see how things were going, they informed me that they were no longer living in the same house. The owners of the house had oddly decided to do repairs late at night above the room where Carlos, Maria and their family slept huddled together on their two mats. In addition to being repeatedly awakened by noise, the family was soaked by water that poured through the cracks of their wooden ceiling when the owners decided to wash the floor at 11 p.m. Carlos and Maria understood that they were no longer welcome.

It took Carlos, Maria and their children a few weeks to accept my invitation to be part of our church community, but one Sunday the family showed up at our church in Quito. I was moved as Carlos stood up during sharing time to express his gratitude for the mats and blankets we had given him so that his family no longer had to sleep on cardboard on the damp floor. But I almost broke down when Carlos expressed gratitude that his family was not alone in their struggle. They now had friends and a community—a foundation for beginning a new life in Ecuador.

Carlos and Maria are currently in a temporary shelter in Quito. Since moving, Carlos and Maria's son, their son's wife and their two children joined them in Quito—having been forced to flee persecution in Colombia. Their family, along with thousands of other Colombian refugees, continue to seek job stability, community, prosperity, freedom from discrimination and refuge from violence and persecution. The Mennonite community of Quito continues to seek answers to these large, complex problems, beginning with a helping hand and an open heart.—*David H. Shenk, a Mennonite Mission Network worker living in Quito, Ecuador*

*Names have been changed for protection.

Fuel for extremism beyond bin Laden, says prof

EMU professor Lisa Schirch visited Pakistan a week before Bin Laden's death.

Photo provided

Eastern Mennonite University professor Lisa Schirch with Ali Gohar (left) and Jennifer Jag Jivan (right), Pakistani graduates of EMU's master's program in conflict transformation

Pakistan-based graduates of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) say U.S. military policy in their country has fed extremism and that, sadly, such extremism may not subside with the death of Osama bin Laden.

That was a major finding of EMU professor of peacebuilding Lisa Schirch, who was in Pakistan the last week of April, researching and consulting with Pakistani peace groups in Islamabad, south of the city where Osama bin Laden was killed on May 2.

Many of the Pakistanis consulted by Schirch previously studied at EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and Summer Peacebuilding Institute in Harrisonburg, Va. Schirch's Pakistani colleagues noted that thousands of innocent civilians in their country have been killed, contributing to widespread anger and, ironically, to more support for Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

"U.S. military experts agree that over the last 10 years Al Qaeda has increased its members and number of bases around the world despite hundreds of billions of U.S. dollars spent on the War on Terror," says Schirch, who holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, Fairfax, Va.

Schirch says her friends and colleagues in Pakistan told her, "Yes, we have a mess in our country. But when you add the American policy mess to ours, it makes a disaster. It seems like the Americans don't have a plan, just bombs."

At one peacebuilding organization visited by Schirch, she saw a poster that read, "The more we sweat for peace, the less we bleed in war."

Schirch says, "The Pakistani people themselves fund and carry out almost 90 percent of all the work for peace, development and human rights in Pakistan."

Schirch says she is familiar with the following Pakistani-led peacebuilding efforts:

- interfaith dialogues and reconciliation programs between tribes;
- peace education programs in schools and madrassas;
- microcredit loan programs to help people develop viable livelihoods and
- media ads to stop harmful practices against girls and women; thoughtful videos produced on such topics as traditional Muslim men walking their daughters safely to school.

Schirch says many Pakistani Christians, belonging to a small minority of the population, take huge personal risks to protect the rights of all religious and ethnic minorities. Pakistanis welcome the United States playing a major role in diplomacy and development in the region, noting that these are the real solutions to the root causes of the problems, says Schirch. But she adds that many Pakistanis believe "America isn't serious about diplomacy, only about its bombs and weapons."

In interviews with diverse groups in Pakistan, Schirch found unanimous condemnation of American drone bombs targeting extremists, which have caused hundreds of civilian deaths. But there is also common ground, she adds. Many Pakistanis share Americans' hope that bin Laden's death will bring an end to the War on Terror and will lead to U.S. military withdrawal from these regions, she says.

"The wars in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq impose costs on all of us," says Schirch.

America isn't serious about diplomacy, only about its bombs and weapons.—Lisa Schirch

Schirch traveled to Pakistan as part of her ongoing work as a research professor and policy expert with EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. In April, Schirch received a $70,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to continue her work of educating Washington policymakers about grass-roots peacebuilding efforts and to bring the voices of civil society members in war-torn countries to the attention of policymakers.—*Bonnie Price Lofton of EMU*

North Korean visitors describe MCC as 'family'

Two Korean men who work with Mennonite Central Committee visit Canada.

Two men from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) visited Canada March 7-17, sampling Canada's frigid winter weather, a smorgasbord of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs and even tasting made-in-Canada kimchee, a staple Korean side dish of preserved cabbage.

Kim Chol Su, executive director of the Korea Canada Cooperation Agency (KCCA), which facilitates much of MCC's work in the DPRK, also known to people outside the country as North Korea, and Ri Il Jun, an officer of the agency, were hosted at five MCC offices in Canada.

Their tour began in the east, visiting the MCC Canada Ottawa Office, meeting a member of Parliament and sitting in on a House of Commons question-and-answer session. They proceeded west to MCC Ontario offices in Kitchener-Waterloo, stopping to see a thrift shop, a Ten Thousand Villages store and an MCC Ontario program for homeless women.

Then it was on to Manitoba, where severe weather cramped plans to see some farms. They did get to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg and the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, however. Then they moved on to Alberta and three farms and, lastly, to the MCC British Columbia offices, a warehouse, thrift shop and gleaning program. The MCC-sponsored visit reinforced ongoing efforts to build bridges with people from a country that, "generally speaking, has been painted as 'the enemy,' " says Kathi Suderman. From Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Suderman and her husband, Rod, serve as MCC Northeast Asia representatives, based in Beijing, China. Kathi, who works with KCCA on behalf of MCC, accompanied the men on the trip.

MCC began work in the DPRK in the 1990s in response to famine there. Its current focus is on sustainable agriculture and providing food and material aid to health-care facilities, mostly tuberculosis and hepatitis hospitals and rest homes, as well as orphanages.

"Most of what the DPRK has experienced in relation to the outside world over the past 60 years has been hostility," Kathi Suderman says. She adds that political restrictions that limit interactions with people from the DPRK make it difficult to put a face to them and view them as humans. This adds to misunderstanding, making rare exchanges, like this one, all the more valuable in fostering relationships. Last year's two serious artillery exchanges between the Koreas, which are still technically at war, reinforce the urgency of the need for communication bridges, she says.

The visit provided Kim and Ri a behind-the-cargo-container view of the material aid that arrives in the DPRK. At MCC Canada relief centers and warehouses, the two men saw volunteers assembling and/or packing blankets, health kits, newborn kits, school kits and canned meat. They saw volunteers dicing and dehydrating vegetables, then packing them into soup mixes.

Abe Janzen

Ri Il Jun (second from right) and Kim Chol Su (right), both officials of Korea Canada Cooperation Agency, which facilitates MCC's work in the DPRK, tour Arnold Retzlaff's beef cattle farm in Rosemary, Alberta. Also in the photo (from left) are Rob Baerg, MCC Alberta board member; Retzlaff's children, Rachel, Robin and Owen; and Kathi Suderman, MCC representative for Northeast Asia.

The men were impressed that about one-eighth of MCC's $81 million income in 2009 and 2010 was raised through the recycling of gently used clothing, books and household items in MCC's 100-plus thrift shops in Canada and the United States, Suderman says.

Openly viewing MCC's operations and meeting participants from all walks—directors to hands-on volunteers—helps build trust for the organization among DPRK partners. "The assumption can be that we have a hidden agenda," says Joe Manickam, MCC area director for Asia. "We do have hope in the Korean people and long for the day when all of us can communicate with others in a less restrictive form."

Kim spoke in terms of family ties. "There is a saying in Korean that one must visit family members often in order to be a family," he said. The warmth with which MCC Canada received them makes MCC "like family," he said, and they invited MCC directors to visit them in the DPRK.

KCCA also has issued an invitation to MCC to send two English teachers to work in a middle school in the DPRK. Teaching opportunities are posted at mcc.org/serve.—*Emily Will for Mennonite Central Committee*

mPress produces more than news coverage

Convention newspaper staff members now work for the church.

Photo provided

mPress staff outside the convention center at Columbus 2009

Coffee cups and cameras clutter the newsroom as Goshen (Ind.) College students and other journalists piece together *mPress*, the daily newspaper for the biennial conventions of Mennonite Church USA. But amid the mess, seeds are planted in students to use their communications skills to serve the church.

For Jennifer (Rupp) Steiner of Goshen, volunteering for *mPress* at the Atlanta 2003 and Charlotte 2005 conventions were her first opportunities to write for the church. Today she is communications coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes.

"The experiences of being a part of *mPress* twice helped solidify that working in communications for a church-related organizations was a good fit for me," Steiner says.

Sheldon Good of Lansdale, Pa., also sees his *mPress* experience as "a stepping stone" toward his current job as assistant editor for *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

"My work with *mPress* [at Columbus 2009] put me in conversation with many church leaders I had only heard of or communicated with virtually," Good says, remembering an interview with Jim Wallis (president and CEO of Sojourners in Washington, D.C.) before Wallis spoke during an adult worship service. "But just as important was the chance to experience and share stories from the local community where convention took place."

Over three conventions, about 40 Goshen College students have served on *mPress* staff. Of those, at least five are working for the church: Anna Groff, associate editor of *The Mennonite*; Bethany Nussbaum, advancement director for Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio; Sarah Schlegel, pastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind.; Good and Steiner.

mPress is published as part of a hands-on course, Religious Journalism, which is offered every other year at Goshen. After six weeks of study, students are put to the test during the week of convention.

"The nights are short, and the days are intense," says Duane Stoltzfus, who serves as editor of *mPress*, working alongside Rachel Lapp Whitt, managing editor; both are Goshen communication professors. "Students may be used to staying up past midnight, but I'm not," says Stoltzfus.

He says that he generally stays in the newsroom while students cover the convention news. "I look forward to having students excitedly report back on what they found," he says. "They become the eyes and ears for many of us who wish we could be more than one person at a gathering like this."

The idea for *mPress* first came to Stoltzfus at Nashville 2001, when he caught a glimpse of the power of student journalism in a convention setting in the work of *mVision* (Mennonite Vision), a nightly newscast produced by Goshen students. Stoltzfus imagined a print publication that would generate a similar level of energy and caliber of work. The agency that had been coordinating the convention newspaper was ready for a break, and Jorge Vallejos, then director of convention planning, quickly signed up a Goshen crew for the next gathering. The first issue of *mPress* rolled off the press at Atlanta 2003.

The print edition of *mPress* consists of four issues containing news, features, funnies and photos. One of the paper's humorous traditions is a "Top 10" list for which convention-goers can submit entries. *mPress* also offers those not attending convention a way to stay informed about the event. At Columbus 2009, *mPress* provided a continuously updated website (www.goshen.edu/mpress), which attracted viewers from 33 countries—an average of 736 views each day. At Pittsburgh 2011, *mPress* plans to increase its web coverage, using students' skills in video and audio production to introduce podcasts and videocasts.

The team in Pittsburgh will include 18 Goshen students, four high school interns and editors from *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*. Professional staff will include photographers Vada Snider and Tyler Klassen, designers Rebecca Helmuth and Cara Rufenacht, and Michael Sherer, who will help with information technology.

High school students coming to convention with their youth groups can strengthen their journalism and communications skills by participating as *mPress* interns. For information on *mPress* internships at Pittsburgh 2011, contact Stoltzfus at dstoltzfus@goshen.edu. —*Kelsey Shue, Becca Kraybill and Mennonite Church USA staff*

Making a Congo cloth connection

Quilter prays with every stitch, opens opportunity for others at Pittsburgh 2011

In the spring of 2009, Christine Nofsinger spent two weeks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to attend a high school graduation in Kinshasa, the capital. While there, she was blown away by beauty.

"I fell in love with the colors," she said. "I loved how women dressed."

Photo provided

Nancy Myers models her jacket.

Nofsinger, a librarian and quilter, lives in Marcellus, Mich. "After I got home I started to turn some of the beautiful cloth I bought into a quilt," she said. "It became my way of praying for Congo. Every stitch was a prayer."

Nofsinger had been in DRC at the invitation of Suzanne and Tim Lind and their daughter, Rose, the high school graduate. The Linds represent Mennonite Central Committee in DRC and are members, with Nofsinger, of Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite near Constantine, Mich. Along with other members of a group called Michiana Friends of Congo, Nofsinger and the Linds came up with the idea of using the beauty of cloth to strengthen bonds between Mennonites in DRC and the United States. They called it the Congo Cloth Connection. Since 2003, Mennonite Church USA has been working at church relationships with Congolese churches.

At Pittsburgh 2011, July 4-9, Mennonites will have a chance to participate in the Congo Cloth Connection.

A dazzling array of cloth will be for sale, $10 per yard, at a Congo Cloth Market. A quilt, comforter and wall hanging pieced of Congo cloth will be stitched—"every stitch a prayer"—and auctioned at the convention. The Congolese director of a sewing workshop benefiting from these sales will be at the convention to meet U.S. Mennonites.

Profits from the sale of cloth will initially benefit two Congolese sewing groups: first, the BOMEN Sewing Training Center and Workshop, a new project of the Bondeko Mennonite Church in Kinshasa to train female heads of household, teenage mothers and unemployed young women in sewing; and second, a similar project in eastern Congo for women who have been victims of sexual violence.

A key link in the connection is Cisca Ibanda, a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Congo and of the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee. Ibanda encouraged them to partner in prayer with American Mennonites through the Congo Cloth Connection.

Three congregations—the Florence church, Kern Road Mennonite in South Bend, Ind., and Silverwood Mennonite in Goshen, Ind.—formed Michiana Friends of Congo in 2007. Vicki Smucker of Goshen, a member of Kern Road, was part of a delegation from Mennonite Church USA that visited DRC in 2007 to foster relationships with Congolese Mennonite churches.

"I'm not a quilter," Smucker said at a meeting of the Connection committee. "But I like the idea of connecting with Congo through beauty." Smucker scanned several hundred lengths of cloth that had been brought to the U.S. in preparation for Pittsburgh 2011. She chose a rich pattern that she will make into a jacket she will wear when volunteering at the Connection booth in Pittsburgh.

"Congo cloth" refers to a style, not necessarily the origin of the cloth. Wax-print cloth, which came originally from Indonesia and was introduced in Congo in the mid-19th century, is the typical day-to-day dress. However, only some of this style of cloth is currently made in Congo, due to economic stress. Many Congolese church groups design cloth with symbolism for special occasions such as the October 2010 International March for Women in eastern Congo. These have been available in limited quantities.

Ways for people to take the Connection beyond Pittsburgh 2011 include:

- Inquire about hosting a Congo Cloth Market.
- Buy cloth and send a short description of how the cloth has been used, including a photograph, for the Congo Cloth Connection blog at congocloth@blogspot.com.
- Send a freewill contribution.
- Exchange prayer requests and greetings through the Congo Cloth Connection Facebook page.—*Nancy Myers*

Tim Lind

A woman sells Congo cloth in Kinshasa, DRC.

Mission matriarch, 101, shares wisdom

Elizabeth Martin tells mission stories at Eastern Mennonite Missions chapel.

Tammy Evans

Elizabeth Martin tells "101 Years of Mission Stories" at Eastern Mennonite Missions chapel on April 19.

Elizabeth Martin's "101 Years of Stories" on April 19 transported Eastern Mennonite Missions staff members back in time to an era of intense mission fervor in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference churches.

Elizabeth, who along with her husband, Daniel, raised seven children while farming and homemaking south of New Holland, Pa., remembered when a special train of 10 cars transported Lancaster Mennonites to New York to see their first EMM missionaries off to Africa in 1934.

When those first missionaries, Elam and Elizabeth Stauffer, returned for their first home assignment in 1940, Martin remembered that the annual Mission Board conference at New Holland Mennonite Church was so packed the children had to sit on the platform of the pulpit to make room for adults on the benches.

Then it was even more exciting when Daniel and Blanche Sensenig, from their home church, New Holland Mennonite, left for Ethiopia in 1947.

"We always gave the children coins for church offerings," Elizabeth said. "But on the EMM offering Sunday, the kids got more money to put in the offering." Ray Martin, who assisted his mother with the chapel, said, "It is special for me to reflect on 101 years of family commitment to missions and the profound impact that EMM has had on our family."

Elizabeth remembered how Daniel always began the day on the farm by taking the Bible off the clock shelf for quiet reading. Then he knelt by the sofa for prayer before speaking to anyone else. "I always knew I wasn't the first person in his life," she said. "First, he met God."

Influenced by their parents' deep vision for missions, it's not surprising that five out of the seven Martin children or their spouses are ordained or licensed ministers. Five of the seven have also served overseas or domestically in church and mission settings, four of them in EMM programs.

Mary worked in the church with her bishop husband, Paul Zehr; Luke, with his wife, Mary Kauffman, served as an EMM worker in Vietnam; Grace, married to James Dickerson, served in the EMM VS program in Washington, D.C., and stayed on in the city. Bob, married to Sarah Martin, served as pastor at New Holland Mennonite and as chaplain at Mennonite Home.

Aaron, married to Ruth Parsons, was a mathematics and astronomy teacher, including several years at Lancaster Mennonite School, and they have been active with Habitat for Humanity. Ray, married to Luann Habegger, directs a network of Christian organizations and individuals working in global health called Christian Connections for International Health. He served with EMM in Somalia and Tanzania from 1961 to 1964 but spent most of his life working internationally with USAID and the World Bank.

Earl, married to Patricia Hostetter, served with Mennonite Central Committee in the Philippines and in Vietnam during the war and stayed behind when U.S. forces withdrew. For a month, the family had no word from him. When a reporter asked Daniel if he was worried about his son's safety, he said, "The safest place to be is in the will of the Lord."

Elizabeth loved penning letters to her own children and other missionaries she knew in far away places like Somalia or India. When she wrote to Ray out in the Somali bush, it took at least a month and a half to get an answer. "It took lots of faith, patience and prayer," she said.

Norman Shenk, EMM's former CFO and president, remembers Elizabeth and Daniel (deceased in 1976) as front-row fixtures in the Worldwide EMM Missionary Conferences held each summer in a large tent on the campus of Lancaster Mennonite School.

On the EMM offering Sunday, the kids got more money to put in the offering.—Elizabeth Martin

"They were always at the conferences," Shenk says. "And they never missed a missionary commissioning either."

Ray remembers a story that has become part of the family lore. "One year, when Pop didn't have enough money to put in the annual mission offering because of the uneven cash flow of a farmer, he was so determined to support missions at the desired level that he borrowed the money to give EMM what they were asking for per member giving." (EMM gave a suggested amount for each member.)—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

No disciplinary action for WDC pastor

Pastor performed a same-sex covenant service last September.

On May 6, Western District Conference minister Clarence Rempel sent a letter to WDC pastors about the actions of WDC's Leadership Commission regarding Joanna Harader, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

The commission reviewed Harader's credentials after she performed a same-sex covenant service last September and eventually found her credentials in order. No disciplinary action was taken.

Rempel's letter states that this action is not meant to set a precedent. "It is not to be assumed that a future situation would have the same outcome," he writes. "If another pastor should choose to conduct a same-sex covenant service, he or she will have their credentials reviewed by the Leadership Commission according to our present polity."

Rempel goes on to quote Mennonite Church USA's Membership Guidelines, which say, "Pastors holding credentials in a conference of Mennonite Church USA may not perform a same-sex covenant ceremony."

In its review of the action, attached to Rempel's e-mail, the commission's members state that they recognize the authority of the 2001 Membership Guidelines for Mennonite Church USA and that "such action would be grounds for review of [pastors'] credentials by their area conference's credentialing body."

The commission also acknowledges that the latest word from Mennonite Church USA regarding how to be in relationship with LGBTQ people came on July 4, 2009, when the delegate body passed a resolution that recognizes that "current and ongoing debate exists over issues surrounding human sexuality and conference response to congregations at variance" and asked denominational leadership to "provide and encourage the use of resources which assist conferences and congregations to engage in this discernment."

After spending "significant time in holy struggle of discernment through prayer, discussion, listening to how various responses by our commission would be received by differing congregations throughout our district," the commission could not reach consensus and voted 4-2 to find Harader's credentials to be in order.

The commission's review includes a response by the majority and two dissenting opinions. The majority writes that Harader "spent time seriously engaged with God's Word in this issue and was able to articulate what she heard through that discernment process to us. She then went to her congregational leadership for counsel, and then to the entire congregation, where Peace Mennonite Church gave consensus approval for her to minister in the way she did." Their action, they write, applies to these specific circumstances and should not be understood to be "a blanket affirmation of the action of any and every WDC pastor who would choose to officiate at a same-sex union."

One dissenting opinion, while arguing for disciplinary action, writes that "the church must make room for dissenting voices" but has failed to do this.

The second dissenting opinion states that "while Joanna tested her discernment in her local congregation before acting, at the same time her action circumvented the ongoing discernment process in the larger district and denominational faith community."

In a May 13 interview, Harader said she is glad for herself and her congregation that she has retained her credentials. She said the process of discernment with the Leadership Commission "was respectful," that she and her congregation "were heard and listened to throughout the process."

WDC moderator Doug Penner, in a May 13 interview, said the process "reflects the governance arrangements [WDC] has in place." He said he had hoped for consensus, but the commission "did its best to come to some resolution." This process reflects "a strong congregational emphasis" and "the diversity in [WDC] on these issues." He also emphasized that this is not a precedent.

Rempel's letter notes that plans are to have this decision on the agenda for WDC's annual assembly July 29-30. Penner added that WDC leadership is still deciding how to address the decision but that they will deal with it prayerfully.

In a May 13 interview, Terry Shue, director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA, said, "We respect the authority of individual conferences, and the Leadership Commission did due diligence in understanding the membership guidelines."

However, he added, "it's likely to be a surprise [to other conferences] at the conclusion they came to."

Since credentials are transferrable to other conferences, this will give pause to other conferences.

The fact that the same-sex couple involved are not members of a Mennonite congregation is not a factor, he said. "The guidelines don't speak to who the couple is. It's a statement to the pastor."—*Gordon Houser*

Phoenix decision: lessons in intercultural transformation

The discussion surrounding Convention 2013 in Phoenix was a polarizing issue, with race at its center. The discussion highlighted the fact that the perception of race within Mennonite Church USA is changing at a rate greater than our traditional church structures can handle. Antiracism has long been a priority within our church, but our perception of race today in North America is different from what it was when Mennonite Church USA was first formed in 2001.

In an article for the September 2010 issue of *The Mennonite*, titled "Racial Healing in the Church," I wrote that our church is somewhere in between symbolic change and identity change on the antiracism continuum. To understand why the Phoenix decision was such a difficult decision for our leaders and constituency, one should understand what happens when a system designed for one culture tries to make decisions for a new and changing constituency. While noble, our antiracism efforts are still grounded in structures and practices derived from the norms and worldview of the dominant culture. Although many of our antiracism efforts have strongly focused on institutional racism, we have not given equal weight to the development of intercultural competence, or interpersonal relationships among people from different cultures.

Sammy's song: A light bulb came on for me when I sat with a Goshen (Ind.) College student named Sammy. After almost a year of discussion and debate about whether or not to hold our 2013 convention in Phoenix, I finally understood it from a Hispanic point of view. I had been so focused about transformation at the institutional level that I forgot the work that might be needed at the intercultural and interpersonal level. Sammy spoke not only to my mind but to my heart. Sammy spoke out of his personal fear and anger, his reality.

During a trip to the Grand Canyon when Sammy was 16, he was arrested and held until his mother was able to bring his identification to the authorities. While talking with a multiracial group of Goshen College students in March, I reflected on the suggestion that we have a "white ally" for Latinos attending the 2013 convention. The theory is that to provide safety, whites would partner with Latinos while travelling to and within Arizona.

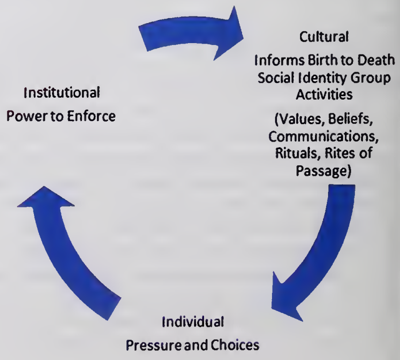
"It becomes more than a fear when you have to endure it," Sammy said, "when you have to pass through it. All of a sudden I became this illegal immigrant, which I was not, I am not. I am a Puerto Rican. You need a white person to make you feel like you are secure? Who gives white people the right to feel like they are entitled to protect me? I don't need a white person to protect me. It is not about Arizona. It is not about the issue of going to Arizona. Arizona is a symbol of fear; it is a symbol of hate. How can you worship God when you don't feel protected? My biggest dream is to walk with my brothers and sisters in Arizona, but the reality is that I could get harassed. This goes way beyond our heads."

Head case: "This goes way beyond our heads." Even Sammy himself did not realize how profound a statement he made; I'm not sure I can adequately convey the "heart" of that statement. I am probably going to confuse people more. The song that Sammy's heart sang to my heart lets me know that neither the convention planned for Phoenix in 2013 nor the laws of Arizona were ever the most significant issue our church needed to address. Sammy was in his own way echoing the prophetic voice of Revelation 7:9: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne."

Yet there are things that stand in the way of this vision. In a recent gathering of the Constituency Leaders Council, Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said, "Racism is a besetting sin of Mennonite Church USA. It is a problem of racism that affects how we *all* relate to one another."

The problem is a collective set of systems, behaviors and cultures that benefits whites (those in the dominant culture) but doesn't fully address the needs, concerns and fears of people of color who have been raised outside that system—or even within it. A sobering example of the flaws in our current system (and how it relates to people of color in leadership) was the public confrontation between racial/ethnic leaders that occurred at the Leaders' Forum in Pittsburgh last September.

The Leaders' Forum was attended by more than 200 people representing agency boards, Executive Board, constituency groups and area conferences. The Intercultural Relations Reference Committee was also present. The IRRC is a representative group of racial/ethnic leaders who speak to issues and policies of Mennonite Church USA as they pertain to people of color. The group consists of me as chairperson and two representatives each of the recognized racial/ethnic con-



stituency groups—African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA), Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH) and Native Mennonite Ministries (NMM). In addition we have a white representative and two representatives each from the immigrant African and Asian cultures.

The April 29, 2010, letter from IMH requesting that Mennonite Church USA "rethink" the decision to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix created a widespread response across our denomination. Every level of the church was engaged in some way in trying to respond to the concerns expressed by IMH. A relational culture was trying to engage a results-oriented culture. For once this system that works well for those of Anglo and Swiss-German heritage was given a challenge that would test every aspect of its decision-making process.

How was a system that was interculturally inept going to respond to an issue needing deep intercultural understanding? It seemed the IRRC was the most appropriate forum to summarize and analyze several months of discernment and conversations and bring it to a close. After all, the issues involved people of color, so who could better analyze all of the information and make a recommendation to the Executive Board? Along with others, I felt that a statement should come from the collective wisdom of the people of color. So, just prior to the Leaders' Forum, the IRRC met. In addition to our regular agenda, the Phoenix decision was on the table. Rightly or not, from the beginning I have seen my role as the director of intercultural relations as someone to help bridge the communication gap among the various cultures and races in our church.

We drafted a recommendation based on conversations with many church leaders of all races. We relied heavily on documents from IMH as well as conversations that took place during and after Mennonite Church USA representatives traveled to Phoenix in August 2010.

After two days of meeting, reflection and revisions, the IRRC created a document. Little did I know the document would send waves of sadness and pain through the members of the IRRC and those at the Leaders' Forum. What seemed just a few hours earlier to be a consensus document fell apart in anger and confusion. Some members of the IRRC felt betrayed. Others felt as if their voice was never truly heard. Those who witnessed this display of emotion and intense conversation were left to wonder what happened. Where was all this pain and division coming from? It was a time that left more than one person thinking, "The church got what it wanted. The white 'powers that be' finally achieved their goal of divide and conquer. People of color are now fighting among themselves." It made me wonder if I should have done things differently and avoided reading the document at all.

The white burden: At the time, some believed that instead of taking responsibility for making a decision, the church hid behind the IRRC and me as a black staff person. They felt that the fallout at the Leaders' Forum was the logical end result of our racist practices and system. However, I never felt like this was my responsibility alone to bear. I felt great partnership and support throughout this process from both the board and our executive staff. Through this painful experience, I learned that among people of color, there is great mistrust in our system. Apparently they thought that as a person of color, my actions could only be justified through white people. White power is the only discernible power, even among people of color.

To deal with the misunderstandings that arose in the meeting, IRRC met together face-to-face in March. Since it was the first time we met since the Leaders' Forum, we hired two mediators, a white woman and a Latina women, to help us discern what happened in Pittsburgh and to help our group rebuild community. After much reflection and time spent with the mediators, I now understand that what happened with the IRRC can be directly attributed to racism and the lack of intercultural competence. The IRRC should never have responded to agenda handed down by those in the dominant culture.

If the system was truly responsive to people of color, many of our decisions would be different. Some questions would never have to be asked; there are some things you just know when you have increased intercultural competence. Although there are many people of color in various leadership roles in Mennonite Church USA, the cultural competence is still not there. The IRRC consensus document fell apart for a number of reasons:

- **Pressure**: People of color cannot speak for their entire constituency any more than a white person can speak for the entire white race. It is an unfair burden that our society puts on people of color.
- **Culture**: Race is an illusion that is not easily definable; it is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Terms such as Hispanic, African-American and Asian are generic terms that look great on surveys but do not adequately reflect the cultural and socioeconomic norms that represent a person's beliefs and behaviors. Still, Mennonite historian Felipe Hinojosa reminds me that even though race and ethnicity are complex issues, "they help ground us and reflect our histories of struggle in this country."
- **Communication**: Intercultural understanding and intercultural racism are the realities of people of color. We as people of color have to learn to understand one another and work with each other.
- **Power:** Well-intentioned white people who see themselves as allies often further the separation between races by rushing to demonstrate solidarity with one group while alienating another group. Even the reaction to people of color having a disagreement is somewhat paternalistic and racist.
- **Relationships:** The members of the IRRC went for results before we ourselves had established a covenant of trust with each other.

(Continued on page 48)

Sadly, the longer I work in my role the clearer it becomes that years of oppression, slavery, colonialism, Jim Crow laws and genocide affect how people of color deal with each other. Some still believe that "white is right." Even people of color within our system operate with this in our subconscious mind. White people designed the system to benefit themselves. They created it, and those of us who have chosen to be a part of it have to deal with the lingering effects of white privilege and dominating power. But I do not believe it is up to white people alone to fix the problem. All of us have a role in helping the church become what God intends it to be.

Intercultural competence: Mark Twain once wrote, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrowmindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime" (*The Innocents Abroad/Roughing It*). The letter from IMH concerning Arizona sent the church on a journey it was ill prepared for, but it was a journey that forced the church to examine its core theology and its statements on immigration and antiracism

Exciting things are happening within Latino congregations, various African groups and the Indonesian community. But our systems and practices do not reflect these new realities. Not only have we failed to capture the energy in our racial/ethnic churches but we have also failed to capitalize on changes within our youth, urban congregations and women. The dominance of the white male, though still powerful, is waning. How does our church adapt? What does it mean to be Mennonite in 2011? Can it be tied to style of music, order of worship or a common European heritage?

Who gives white people the right to feel like they are entitled to protect me?—Sammy

Mennonite pastor Leonard Dow says it best: "There's a high regard for our names, you know, Yoder, etc., ... I can't replicate that, but the Anabaptist [quality] that I really valued and received when I was in high school and college is the theology."

I am a man. The Phoenix decision involved several groups who were trying to communicate with the love of Christ. But neither side could fully understand the other. Some spoke from the heart, and others listened with their heads. Some may say my opinion is biased or influenced by my being a staff person. I would say that it's influenced more by my admiration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the cultural realities of being a black man in America. My default setting is to fight injustice and let the world know that "I am a man."

No place in the United States should be off-limits to me or anyone else. If you say I can't, then I will. If you try to stop me, I will press forward. If you tell me I am not good enough, I will prove to you that I am better. That is what has been passed on to me by a mother and father who grew up in Mississippi in the early 1900s and survived the racism of the Deep South, the Great Depression and two world wars. My context is different from that of other people of color. But all of us have ancestors who faced oppression as immigrants, slaves or people who were forced from their land.

Intercultural transformation: In Portland, Ore., at the Executive Board meeting in April, there was much discussion about the Phoenix decision, the lessons learned and the next steps for the antiracism work in Mennonite Church USA. We agreed together that the pain we had experienced at the Leaders' Forum had taught important lessons about learning to listen to one another.

Ervin Stutzman also introduced a purposeful plan that outlines future priorities of Mennonite Church USA to be considered by the delegates at the July assembly in Pittsburgh. In keeping with this plan, the Executive Board agreed to expand the antiracism priority to include the much broader work of intercultural transformation. The goal is to create a transformative process that focuses on dismantling racism (systemic and personal), cultivating intercultural competence, healing racial divisions and leading the church toward the unity of diverse peoples depicted in Revelation 7:9.

While much of the leadership for this work will fall on Iris deLeon-Hartshorn, the new director for transformative peacemaking, this will truly be a process that mobilizes our entire church, no matter where we are organizationally on the continuum or where we are in our personal understandings and beliefs.

My brief conversation with Sammy at Goshen College helped me realize the need for intercultural transformation within Mennonite Church USA. I have come to realize more deeply that my view is not the only view. As a part of a bigger community I cannot afford only to see the world from my perspective and through my cultural lens.

There comes a time when to be truly in solidarity we must allow the love of Christ to pump through our hearts and listen to its beat. Thank you, Sammy, for speaking up to communicate with your heart and not only your head.—*Glen Guyton, associate executive director for constituent resources, Mennonite Church USA*

Four priorities may expand to seven

Executive Board proposes updating priorities for the next decade.

Delegates at Pittsburgh 2011 will decide on whether or not to expand and update the current churchwide priorities for the next decade.

The current four priorities include holistic witness, antiracism, leadership development and global connections. These four were adopted in 2001.

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board drafted the new list of seven priorities at its meeting in Portland, Ore., April 14-16. The EB indicated the first three are always top priorities and that the next four priorities are for the next few years.

The new list includes these: Christian formation, Christian community, holistic Christian witness, stewardship, leadership development, intercultural transformation and church-to-church relationships.

According to the April 25 document, each priority will have subheadings beneath it that further describe the priority.

Under the priorities are tangible goals to implement. For example, under Christian formation is the following goal: "Designate a 'Year of the Bible,' providing resources to enable every congregation to increase its biblical awareness and faithfulness. We might want to make a list of 'core scriptures' that we own as a people."

According to the document, "The goals identified under each of these priorities invite us to work shoulder-to-shoulder in the various levels of community across Mennonite Church USA."

The EB's discussion in Portland focused extensively on the antiracism priority and settled on the term "intercultural transformation." The subheadings under that term in the working document include antiracism (dismantling individual and systemic racism), intercultural competence, healing racial divisions and envisioning Revelation 7:9.

These priorities are part of executive director Ervin Stutzman's purposeful plan to update the 2001-2011 organizational strategy document adopted at Nashville 2001.

If individual delegates wish to give feedback, they may send an e-mail to Ervin R. Stutzman, Executive Director, at ErvinS@MennoniteUSA.org or send responses by post to Mennonite Church USA, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802.—*Anna Groff*

RESOURCES

Teaching That Transforms: Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters by John D. Roth (Herald Press, 2011, $12.99) frames key questions about the future of Christian education and makes the case for Christian schools—in particular Anabaptist-Mennonite schools—offering clear directions while inviting dialogue and alternative perspectives.

Setting the Agenda: Meditations for the Organization's Soul by Edgar Stoesz and Rick M. Stiffney (Herald Press, 2011, $15.99) offers practical advice on how to govern an organization from a spiritual vantage point. It encourages directors of boards to lift themselves out of the present and peer into the future. It also offers more than 90 meditations by a variety of writers that address different moods or challenges boards face in their work.

Dreamtime: Parables of Universal Law While Down Under, edited by Barbara Condron (School of Metaphysics, 2010, $13), tells the stories of a dozen Americans who traveled to Melbourne, Australia, to attend the Parliament of the World's Religions at the end of 2009. More than 5,000 Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Jains and other devotees of religion from 75 countries gathered for a week. This book captures the experiences of people ages 3 to 63.

The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa by Emmanuel Katongole (Eerdmans, 2010, $16) confronts the painful legacy of chaos, war and corruption and shows how it continues to warp the imaginative landscape of African politics and society. It demonstrates the potential of Christianity to interrupt and transform entrenched political imaginations and create a different story for Africa, one of self-sacrificing love that values human dignity and "dares to invent" a better future for all Africans.

Beneath the Cross by Cornelius Martens (Fast Publishing, 2010, $20), first published in German in 1928, has been reissued in English. This autobiography is set in southern Russia in the early 20th century, when the intolerant regime of the Czars was replaced by the even more brutal regime of the Soviets. In this setting, Martens became a traveling evangelist who faced persecution from villagers and bandits, the Orthodox Church and both Czarist officials and the communists who replaced them.

The Witness of the Hebrew Bible for a New Testament Church, edited by Christina Bucher, David Leiter and Frank Ramirez (Brethren Press, 2010, $27.95), includes 13 essays that argue that the Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible, is an essential foundation for the church, including those that emphasize the centrality of the New Testament. It is available online at www.brethrenpress.com.

Colleges, universities, seminaries graduate 1,262

Speakers range from Berenstain Bears books author to human rights activists.

Mary E. Klassen

This painting, a gift to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary from the 2011 graduating class and painted by graduate Rosanna McFadden, provided a backdrop for AMBS' May 21 commencement service that included an address by Heidi Neumark (above), pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, New York.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.
28 graduates, May 21

With words "God's justice and God's peace" from the first hymn in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* as a backdrop for the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) commencement service on May 21, speaker Heidi Neumark began her address with a well-known Old Testament story of injustice. Neumark, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, N.Y., used as a starting point the story from 1 Kings about King Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard. A vineyard takes many years to be fruitful, but Ahab wanted the land for a vegetable garden, she recounted. Then she compared the work of the vineyard to that of a seminary education.

"You have labored in a vineyard and come from a long heritage with deep roots," she said, tracing those roots all the way back to the waters of Jordan River where Jesus was baptized.

AMBS is a seminary of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.—*Mary E. Klassen*

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.
94 graduates, May 22

The Honorable Kimberly J. Mueller, federal judge for the Eastern District of California, quoted from Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" as she addressed the 94 members of Bethel College's class of 2011 on May 22.

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood. ... I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

She was echoing the tone set in the morning baccalaureate worship service, based on words of Jeremiah 29 and William Jennings Bryan and centered on making choices. The three student speakers in the service touched on different ways the choices they made that led them to Bethel shaped their college experiences and determined what they would take with them into the world.

"We're not here by chance—it was a choice," said Greg Shelly, Lenexa, Kan. "Bethel has given us what we need to follow the path" to whatever comes next.

"You can assure yourselves that you have graduated from one of the finest small colleges in the country," Mueller told the graduates. "If you so choose, with a Bethel education you can make all the difference."—*Melanie Zuercher*

Bluffton (Ohio) University
268 graduates, May 8

Bluffton University gives its graduates "O.R.R.s," along with the needed tools and supplies to extend them "into the waters of humanity," Robert Hewitt, a Bluffton alumnus and retired social work educator, told the university's class of 2011 during commencement May 8.

"The Opportunities, the Rights and the Responsibilities are now yours to be active, intentional, more powerful advocates for social and economic justice in your homes, churches, places of employment, communities and this world," said Hewitt, a 1969 graduate and a professor emeritus of social work at Shippensburg (Pa.) University.

Hewitt, who earned his Ph.D. in social work from the University of Pittsburgh, noted this year's civic engagement theme at Bluffton—"Living with Enough: Responding to Global Poverty."

"Remember this," he said, "no matter one's social or economic station in life, within each of us lies a bone-deep longing for freedom, safety, hope, self-respect and the chance to

Vada Snider

Rachel Gaeddert, left, Larned, Kan., and Krishna Phifer, Humble, Texas, light candles during Bethel College's baccalaureate worship service on May 21 .

make an important contribution to family, community and the world. To live fully, we each need ways to express this powerful, natural longing."—*Bluffton University*

Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.
21 graduates, April 30

Eastern Mennonite Seminary graduates Carl and Becky Van Stavern have spent the last three years juggling seminary and eight churches. Carl had five United Methodist congregations, and Becky had three. They drove three hours to EMS from their home in Weston, W.Va.

The Van Staverns were among 21 students to receive master of divinity degrees from EMS on April 30. The Van Staverns came to EMS because they knew seminary alumni Charles and Sharon Miller and Dallas Forren. All three are United Methodist pastors in West Virginia.

George R. Brunk III, dean emeritus and professor emeritus of New Testament at EMS, gave the commencement address, "Anointed for Ministry."

"In ministry, are you anointed or are you appointed?" Brunk asked the graduates in his address. "Anything worthy of being called Christian ministry must put the priority on anointing—the Spirit empowerment that rests upon you."—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of EMS*

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg
451 graduates, May 1

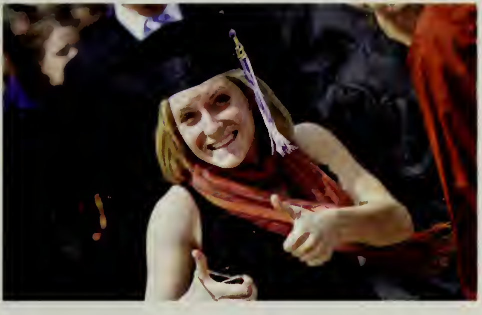
The more than 3,600 people gathered May 1 under a sea of colorful umbrellas at Eastern Mennonite University learned some lessons from bears, but not just any bears.

Michael Berenstain, author and illustrator of the popular Berenstain Bears children's book series created by his parents, Stan and Jan Berenstain, gave the address at EMU's 93rd annual commencement exercises. Berenstain's son, Samuel A. Berenstain, was a member of the class of 2011. He received a bachelor of arts degree in environmental sustainability.

"My family's special contribution to the literary bear clan has come to be universally identified with what are loosely called family values," Berenstain said. "It was never our intention to take on this role of do-it-yourself family counselors, but people are always telling us that they like our books not because 'they teach good lessons' but because 'they teach lessons good.'"

"The ethnic messages of our books are not very original," he said. "They lean heavily on such standbys as the Golden Rule and Love Your Neighbor—scarcely an innovation. Their appeal comes, rather, in the way in which the material is presented. We work hard to make our books funny and visually engaging, to make our characters full-dimensional, and we try to tell good stories."

President Loren Swartzendruber conferred 451 degrees and certificates.—*Jim Bishop of EMU*


Emily Trapp

Goshen College graduate Allyson Uhey, a music major from Fort Wayne, Ind., gives a thumbs up as she walks into the ceremony.

Goshen (Ind.) College
261 graduates, May 1

Goshen College's class of 2011 received degrees on May 1 after being challenged by president James E. Brenneman to have the courage to serve others and encouraged to bring hope and compassion to a broken world by 1969 Goshen graduate Marjory M. Byler, a human rights activist and organizational consultant.

(Continued on next page)

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13-22)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23-July 6)
WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND) (July 22-August 4)
MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (Sept. 19-28)
A PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE (September 20-30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-18)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE II with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct.12-22)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com
9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada
Reg. #50014322
2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

(Continued from page 51)

Byler, who was born and raised in Argentina, worked with Amnesty International for more than 30 years and oversaw a wide range of programs, both in the United States and internationally. In her commencement address, Byler talked about her background, which led to a career in human rights work. She also offered advice on bringing the light of compassion and hope to a broken world.

"I believe that human rights are not just a set of rights—the right of association, expression, the right to shelter, to food, to education—but perhaps most importantly a framework through which to understand how to deal with a broken world and how to begin to help mend it," Byler said. "One way to think about this is to think about the ideas of voice, access and engagement."

Byler encouraged the graduates to broaden their concern for others and help others suffering from discrimination and oppression throughout the world. The class of 2011 had 261 graduates.—*Richard R. Aguirre of Goshen College*

Hesston (Kan.) College
139 graduates, May 8

Hesston College's 139 graduates of the class of 2011 were encouraged during a May 8 commencement ceremony to go into the world with a spirit of love and unity.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus, professor in the peacemaking, justice and conflict studies and Bible, religion and philosophy departments at Goshen (Ind.) College, as well as adjunct professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.) and mother of graduate Rachel Stoltzfus, addressed the graduates with the message "Rooted in Love, Sent Out in Hope."

Stoltzfus' message was based on Ephesians 3:20-21, which served as the Hesston College theme verse for the 2010-11 academic year.

She encouraged the graduates to embody that same spirit as they leave Hesston, go into the world and impact it with their talents and gifts.

Stoltzfus reflected on the struggles of the civil rights movement and her own experiences of growing up in a mixed-race church in Cleveland, Ohio, to illustrate how love can make a difference in the world.

"What impressed me was the ordinariness of it all," she said in reflection of her early church experience. "It's not like every day was a protest march. We were just ordinary people meeting together. We were learning to love one another not in spite of our differences but because we were a church together, and love is just what you do."

Graduates Leah Rittenhouse of Mount Pleasant, Pa., and Alex Roth of Hesston, Kan., were nominated by their classmates to give the student address during commencement. —*Rachel Schlegel of Hesston College*

Recipe for disaster:

1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS

Goodville Mutual

New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Same mission, brand new.

EMM

Going where the church is not… yet.

Experience the new look and feel of Eastern Mennonite Missions.
Learn more at **www.emm.org/newlogo.**

Eastern Mennonite Missions
717 898-2251 | emm.org

CALENDAR

The Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster (MCCL) is auditioning singers for their Carol and Concert choirs on the following Tuesdays: Aug. 2 and Aug. 9. The Carol Choir is for singers entering grades 2-5, and the Concert Choir is for those entering grades 6-8. The mission of MCCL is to train children and youth to glorify Jesus Christ through excellent choral singing. While there is tuition, cost should not be a deterring factor. Financial assistance is available. MCCL is a program of Lancaster Mennonite School. For more information go to www.mennonitechildrenschoir.org.

Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, Minn., will celebrate our *50th anniversary* Sept. 23-25 with a theme of "On the Banks of the River: 50 years of Invitation to the Water of Life (Jeremiah 17:7-8)." Join us for a weekend of stories, music, food, renewing old friendships and celebration of God's faithfulness. Contact us at anniversary@faithmennonite.org or check out details at www.faithmennonite.org.

WORKERS

Gunderson, April Dawn, was licensed as associate pastor of care and counsel at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on April 3.

Herr, Lee Ray, was licensed as deacon at Carpenter Community Church, Talmage, Pa., on April 17.

Martin, Stephen L., began a term as associate pastor at Parkview Mennonite Church, Reamstown, Pa., on March 27.

Rai, Shankarm, was licensed as lead pastor at Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., on April 23.

OBITUARIES

Beachy, John E., 92, Goshen, Ind., died April 18. Spouse: Miriam W. Weaver Beachy. Parents: Eli C. and MaryAnn Kauffman Beachy. Children: John Allen, Kenton, Cheryl Paulovich, Lynette Bauman; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Bender, Ross T., 81, Goshen, Ind., died April 21. Spouse: Ruth Steinmann Bender (deceased). Parents: Christian and Katie Bender. Children: Ross Lynn, Elizabeth Barker, Michael, Lenore Challenger, Anne Jacoby; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: April 26 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Bowman, Joanne Gaye Bowman, 56, Brookline, Mass., died March 11 of ovarian cancer. Spouse: John Lawrence Bowman. Parents: Paul Ezra and Ruth Arlene Detwiler Bowman. Children: Sarah Elizabeth Bowman, Phillip Daniel Bowman. Funeral: April 2 at Mennonite Congregation of Boston, Cambridge, Mass.

Burkey, Arnold A., 88, Milford, Neb., April 6. Spouse: Phyllis Bowen Burkey. Parents: Joseph and Mattie Troyer Burkey. Children: Tim, Sid; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 10 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Dyck, Maria Brandt, 96, Altona, Manitoba, died April 11. Spouse: George H. Dyck (deceased). Parents: Henry F. Brandt and Justina Friesen. Children: Edward, Mabel Wall, Ron; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Ebersole, Seth H., 84, Lititz, Pa., died April 12. Spouse: Virginia Metzler Ebersole. Parents: Benjamin and Laura Hertzler Ebersole. Children: Jane Ebersole, Kathy Kauffman, Charles; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 15 at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa.

Eby, Arlene M. Bomberger, 93, Lititz, Pa., died March 30 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Wilbur M. Eby (deceased). Parents: John M. and Elizabeth L. Landis Bomberger. Children: John W., Lois Hollinger, Beth Weber; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at Blainsport Mennonite Church, Blainsport, Pa.

Geiser, Ruth Norris, 90, Smithville, Ohio, died April 4. Spouse: Lester W. Geiser (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Irene Lillard Norris. Children: Betty Buchwalter, Carol Workman, Jeanne Porter, Debra Mast, Harold; 19 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 9 at Orrville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Goertz, Adalbert Emanuel, 82, Colorado Springs, Colo., died May 7. Spouse: Bärbel Kittler Goertz. Parents: Paul Gerhard Goertz and Margarete Goertz Schukat. Children: Claudia, Dirk, Elke, Frauke, Hans-Peter; 12 grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 10 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Graber, David J., 77, Kalona, Iowa, died April 20. Spouse: Anna Mae Herschberger Graber. Parents: Joe S. and Sarah Troyer Graber. Children: Connie Ebersole, Joseph, David; eight grandchildren. Funeral: April 25 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Make a difference in the world.

Study Public Health at Bluffton University.

Classes begin fall of 2011.

bluffton.edu/publichealth

Heatwole, Fannie R. Martin, 106, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 29. Spouse: Elmer J. Heatwole (deceased). Parents: Daniel R. and Savilla Martin. Children: Dr. Kenneth M., Louise Miller, Dr. Harold F., Dr. Stanley E.; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; 11 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Hostetler, Garrison R., 90, North Canton, Ohio, died April 8. Spouse: Arline Conrad Hostetler. Parents: Alvin and Mary Schloneger Hostetler. Children: Sheila Hostetler, Ted; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 12 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Hostetler, Kenneth E., 85, Hesston, Kan., died March 28. Spouse: Dora L. Sommer Dettwiler Hostetler. Parents: Frank and Lizzie Zimmerman Hostetler. Step-children: Harry Dettwiler, Ann Schroeder; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 31 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Kale, William "Bill" H., 89, Hubert, N.C., died May 3. Spouse: Naomi Ruth Basham Kale. Parents: William H. and Edna Leggett Kale. Children: David, Milton, Barbara Libby; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Miller, Ruth Kathryn Mishler, 93, Shipshewana, Ind., died April 4. Spouse: Ernest Miller. Parents: Homer and Lydia Miller Mishler. Children: Dewayne J., Gerald Keith, Jennifer Kay Miller, Franklin J., Ralph Edward, Dennis Kalb; eight grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Nice, Ruth L., 89, Souderton, Pa., died April 7. Parents: Abram and Katie Landis Nice. Funeral: April 12 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Overgaard, Esther W. Weiler, 91, New Holland, Pa., died March 24. Spouse: Walter C. Overgaard. Parents: Jacob B. and Mable Good Weiler. Children: Lois A. Stetler, Esther F. Gochnauer, Ellen M. Slupe, Linda S. Ferbrache, J. Eric; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 29 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Peachey, Raymond S., 76, Belleville, Pa., died March 24. Spouse: Joanne Kauffman Peachey. Parents: John E. and Katie Spicher Peachey. Children: Sharon, Daryl, Dennis, Delmar; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Penner, John Edwin, 92, Freeman, S.D., died April 15. Spouse: Beulah Graber Nielsen (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Helena Epp Penner. Children: John A., David; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Schmidt, Gertrude Marie Dyck, 91, North Newton, Kan., died April 28. Spouse: Ernest Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Marie Harder Dyck. Children: Carol Klingenberg, Marilyn Van Norden, Michael, Norma Janzen; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 14 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schmucker, Eileen F., 85, Louisville, Ohio, died March 28. Parents: Noah and Eleanor Conrad Schmucker. Funeral: March 30 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Schmucker, Mildred Mary Sommers, 91, Louisville, Ohio, died April 29. Spouse: Elden J. Smucker (deceased). Parents: John and Bertha Taylor Sommers. Children: Ruth Anne Bontreger, Marcia Miller, Eunice Miller, Elva Block; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 4 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Paul M. Schrock, 75, long-time editor at Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., died April 18 at the University of Virginia Medical Center from injuries sustained in an April 15 fall. The accident occurred following a volunteer shift with the Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. During a 41-year career with MPH, Schrock served as assistant to the editor of *Gospel Herald*, editor of the children's magazine *Words of Cheer* (later *On the Line*) and founding editor of *Purpose* magazine. Later, he was book editor and vice president of publishing of Herald Press Trade Books. During a two-year stint in Harrisonburg, he produced "The Mennonite Hour" and "Way to Life" radio programs and taught at EMU. He also operated a stock photo business for many years. As book editor, Schrock shaped the publication of more than 750 books, including the best-selling *More-With-Less Cookbook*, the award-winning *The Upside-Down Kingdom* and the *Believers Church Bible Commentary* series. Schrock was born in Tangent, Ore., graduated from Western Mennonite School in 1954 and from EMU in 1958, and earned a master's degree in journalism from Syracuse University in 1963. Paul was married for 53 years to June (Bontrager) Schrock, who survives, along with children Carmen (and Luke) Schrock-Hurst of Harrisonburg, Brent Schrock of Lititz, Pa., and Andrea Schrock Wenger (and Delbert) of Broadway, Va., and grandchildren Grace, Lucas and Caleb Schrock-Hurst, and Eli and Leah Wenger. A funeral was held at Park View Mennonite Church (Harrisonburg) April 21; memorial service and burial were held in Scottdale April 29. Memorial contributions may be made to Booksavers of Virginia, 731 Mount Clinton Pike #B, Harrisonburg, VA 22802-5463, where Paul was a regular volunteer.

Scott, Sarah Yoder, 86, Morgantown, Pa., died March 27. Spouse: William I. Scott (deceased). Parents: David S. and Emma Stoltzfus Yoder. Step-children: Carolyn Arnold, Susan Scott, Linda Reed, Bill Scott, Bob Scott, Sharon Dilks; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown.

Shenk, Ezra William, 95, Wellman, Iowa, died April 23. Spouse: Sara Marie Kauffman Shenk. Spouse: Carrie Helena Swartzendruber Shenk (deceased). Parents: Abram and Malinda Good Shenk. Funeral: April 27 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Minnie A. Yoder, 89, Leola, Pa., died April 14. Spouse: Mark P. Stoltzfus. Parents: Levi and Lydia Peachey Yoder. Children: Etta Esch, Wilma Eby, Dale, Muriel King, Sara Bushong, Beth Martin; 14 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 18 at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa.

Troyer, David W., 68, Shipshewana, Ind., died April 7 of heart problems. Parents: Glenn and Luella Christner Troyer. Children: Sharleen DeJohn, Shalisa Baxter, Sheila Tarnow, Shari Troyer; eight grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Wipf, John S., 82, Scottsdale, Ariz., died April 27 of pneumonia. Spouse: Gloria Wipf (deceased). Parents: Sam K. and Lydia Wipf. Children: John Jr., Paulette Stravitz; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 30 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Yoder, Polly, 83, Sun City, Ariz., died March 25 of heart problems. Spouse: Clayton L. Yoder (deceased). Children: Gary, Steve, Pam Watson, Beth Yoder; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Herald Press

Mennonite
girls
can
Cook

Mennonite Girls Can Cook

Lovella Schellenberg, Anneliese Friesen, Judy Wiebe, Betty Reimer, Bev Klassen, Charlotte Penner, Ellen Bayles, Julie Klassen, Kathy McLellan, Marg Bartel

Three years ago, Lovella Schellenberg started a blog to record her thoughts, memories and recipes from her Mennonite heritage. It proved so popular that she invited other women to join her. The result: The blog *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*.

Now the popular blog—over 1.6 million visits since 2008—is also a beautiful book that celebrates hospitality, blessing, sharing, friendship and good food.

Royalties will go to charity to feed hungry children.

$24.99 USD/$28.99 CAD
www.mennonitegirlscancook.net

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

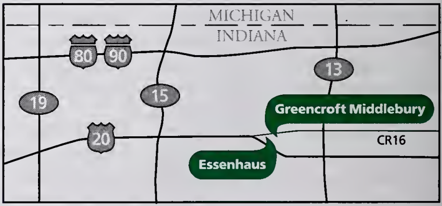
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
20
CR16
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

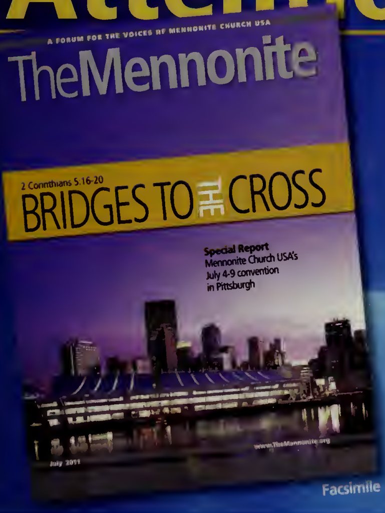
H	O	S	H	E	A	■	A	B	I	R	A	M
A	■	A	■	S	■	O	■	A	■	O	■	E
M	E	N	A	H	E	M	■	A	R	M	O	R
A	■	B	■	B	■	R	■	S	■	A	■	O
N	■	A	M	A	Z	T	A	H	■	N	O	D
■	■	L	■	A	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	A
D	E	L	I	L	A	H	■	■	■	G	■	C
E	■	A	■	■	N	■	R	A	M	A	I	H
M	A	T	T	A	N	■	E	■	■	D	■	■
E	■	■	■	■	A	T	H	A	L	T	A	H
T	A	R	S	U	S	■	O	■	O	■	■	A
R	■	I	■	R	■	A	B	S	A	L	O	M
I	N	V	A	T	N	■	O	■	M	■	■	A
U	■	A	■	■	■	L	A	H	M	T	■	T
S	A	L	O	M	E	■	M	■	T	■	■	H

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

The Fransen Family Foundation is accepting applications from 501(c)3 organizations for ***micro-grants***. See details at fransenfamilyfoundation.org. Submission deadline is July 31, 2011.

Finance director at **Pleasantview Home**, a continuing-care retirement community in Kalona, Iowa. Responsible for all financial operations of $5.5 million budget. Competitive salary/benefits. Full-time but will consider part-time if highly qualified. Minimum four-year degree in finance or accounting. Additional financial and administrative education and experience preferred. Send resume or inquiries to pvadmin@pvhome.org or mail to David Heusinkveld, Pleasantview Home, 811 Third St., Kalona, IA 52247, or call 319-656-2421.

Attention pastors


A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
2 Corinthians 5:16-20
BRIDGES TO THE CROSS
Special Report
Mennonite Church USA's July 4-9 convention in Pittsburgh
www.TheMennonite.org
July 2011
Facsimile

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* **Pittsburgh 2011** issue available

Everyone in your congregation can read about the happenings at **Pittsburgh 2011** even if they don't receive *The Mennonite.*

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at **800-790-2498** or **Subscriptions@themennonite.org** to place your order. We will send your order in bulk at $2 per copy ($3 Cnd). Your order and payment **must be received by July 15.** No invoice will be issued at this low price. Send payment to *The Mennonite,* 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

TheMennonite
www.TheMennonite.org

A different kind of power

Sharon Kniss experiments with power sharing at Our Community Place, in Harrisonburg, Va.

Kara Bender has been a resident of the Chicago area for four years. Recognizing the many privileges she carries by being white, educated and middle-class, Kara attempts to hold the complexity of that reality and wrestle with the responsibility that comes with those advantages. Choosing to live in a low-income community in one of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in the country was a conscious choice. Kara understands that all of life is connected and that she has a self-interest in working towards common liberation with those who are oppressed in society.

What systems of injustice are present in our communities? —Kara Bender

Kara has embraced a philosophy of "power with" her sisters and brothers (rather than power over or power for, others). For the past four years, Kara has been working with the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, a grass-roots organization of older adults working together to bring about positive social change. Although she is less than half the age of her counterparts, Kara works to organize the members around campaigns for more affordable housing. Her role as a facilitator allows her to create the space for conversation and decision making from those people directly affected by the issues, instead of coming into a community to tell the older adults what they should do. This enables the normal power dynamics to be converted as she asks questions, listens and follows the passion the community names. This is one practical way Kara is able to use her intellect and organizing capability in a nondomineering role, where she does not exert her privilege over others but uses her skills to draw out the knowledge and energy already present in people.

"Power with" is not a philosophy encouraged in society but rather one drawn from her faith. Kara understands Jesus' calling as toward liberation and reconciliation. Jesus came promoting an even-ing of society, where the high may be brought low and the low be brought high. He called into question the power structures in the religious and household practices of his time: choosing to heal on the Sabbath, turn over tables in the Temple and eat with the marginalized. Through nonviolent direct action and storytelling, he modeled a new way of being in relationship with each other, creation and God. For those with privilege, be it color of skin, wealth, education or nationality, this requires choosing not to take that privilege for granted but recognize its harmful side effects and the way it contributes to cycles of oppression. For Kara, this begins by building relationships and understanding how to be in solidarity with others.

Kara's philosophy of "power with" also plays out in her daily life. She has posed a question on which to reflect for one year: How do I cultivate a lifestyle that connects me meaningfully with my creator, myself, my community and the Earth's rhythms in a way that is life-giving and sustainable for everyone? Kara relates to an intentional Christian (Mennonite) community where "power with" is played out not only in consensus decision-making but in sharing resources, including one's finances. Kara bicycles frequently, eats as locally and seasonally as possible and promotes creative gardening (such as vertical and rooftop), effective in a dense urban area, to reduce ways her choices contribute to an oil-dependent and environmentally degrading lifestyle that translates into war, poverty, hunger and natural disasters for brothers and sisters across the world. Kara also is passionately involved in promoting and working toward racial justice in her local congregation—an area she would love to see Mennonite Church USA address better.

Kara is a great inspiration to me and challenges me to question my assumptions and my reliance on my personal privilege and power. Kara begs us to assume a position of critical analysis with our surroundings and our relationships. What systems of injustice are present in our communities? In Mennonite Church USA? Where do we see resistance and transformative work being practiced? How can we work to break the cycles of unjust privilege and power rather than acquiescing to their normalcy in our daily lives? For Kara, being a person of power and privilege is not an easy ride through life; rather it's an ongoing struggle to do her own work of healing and participate with others in the process of breaking the chains of injustice and proclaiming liberation for all of God's children. TM

This is the second in Sharon's series of profiles of young adults active on the adventurous journey of following Christ.

FILM REVIEWS

Jane Eyre (PG-13), based on the classic, 19th-century novel, tells the story of an orphan who endures an oppressive school and takes a job as a governess at a country estate called Thornfield. Her employer, the gruff Edward Rochester, is drawn to Jane's intelligence and independent spirit. They fall in love, but a terrible secret disrupts their plans. This adaptation is excellent and worthy of a great novel.—*Gordon Houser*

The Conspirator (PG-13) is based on a little-known event. In the wake of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, seven men and one woman are arrested and charged with conspiring to kill the President, Vice President and Secretary of State. The lone woman charged, Mary Surratt, 42, owns a boarding house where John Wilkes Booth and others met and planned the simultaneous attacks. Frederick Aiken, a 28-year-old Union war-hero, reluctantly agrees to defend Surratt before a military tribunal. As the trial unfolds, Aiken realizes his client may be innocent and is being used as bait to capture the only conspirator to have escaped a massive manhunt, her own son. The film resonates, almost too obviously, with current approaches to prisoners at Guantanamo. It nevertheless shows how fear can drive justice out the window.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEW

Create Space for Peace: Forty Years of Peacemaking, Gene Stoltzfus, 1940-2010, edited by Dorothy Friesen and Marilen Abesamis (TriMark Press, 2011, $16.95), includes material from speeches, sermons, letters and blogs by the founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, who died on March 10, 2010. This book offers "a flavor of Gene's life and work," which affected many people around the world. Stoltzfus wrote in the introduction to his blog: "At root, all of us in this world have the potential to share the power of love, a force that reaches far beyond sentimentality."—*gh*

PEACE
GENE STOLTZFUS

Books on spirituality, science, politics

This semiannual perusal of new books shows how broadly our faith reaches—or needs to reach—as we seek to follow Jesus each day.

Spirituality: Richard Rohr is an outstanding preacher and teacher, and that shows in his books, which include many catchy sentences that sum up his helpful lessons about spirituality.

His most recent books are *A Lever and a Place to Stand: The Contemplative Stance, the Active Prayer* (HiddenSpring, 2011, $15) and *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2011, $19.95).

While both books embrace themes common to many of Rohr's books, these add their own emphases. *A Lever* summarizes Rohr's integration of action and contemplation by calling for the need for "(1) a strong tolerance for ambiguity, (2) an ability to allow, forgive and contain a certain degree of anxiety and (3) a willingness to not know and not even need to know."

Such characteristics also fit what Rohr labels "the second half of life." This does not have to do with chronological age but spiritual maturity. In the first half, "we are usually on bended knee before laws or angrily reacting against them—both immature responses." Our churches, he writes, often keep people in the first half and don't call for real transformation.

What he calls "falling" is a letting go, a surrender to the mercy of God. This is difficult because "the human ego prefers anything ... to falling or changing or dying." But those who fall experience God's "great outpouring."

Science: Perhaps one of the more significant books to come out recently that addresses science and religion is *Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong* by Conor Cunningham (Eerdmans, 2010, $34.99). Cunningham, whose expertise is in theology and philosophy, makes a thorough case arguing the thesis in his subtitle.

He attacks the "foolish wisdom" of many atheists and the "learned ignorance" of many Christians. He goes after the popular ultra-Darwinist Richard Dawkins, whose "veneration of selfishness, rendering it almost absolute, is also anti-evolutionary (just as creationism is antitheological)."

By exploring what Darwin actually taught and what scientists have learned about evolution, Cunningham uses simple logic to render the fundamentalist views of Dawkins and others nonsensical. "Evolutionary psychology," for example, "involves a great deal of mythology, and a plethora of untestable, post hoc explanations," he writes.

The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology, edited by John Polkinghorne (Eerdmans, 2010, $30), takes a different approach. It includes 13 essays by scientists and theologians that address the idea that, as Polkinghorne writes, "The universe is deeply relational in its character and unified in its structure, because it is the creation of the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Politics: Two new books engage us around political theology. *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Posmaterial Citizens* by Graham Ward (BakerAcademic, 2009, $25) is difficult but worth the effort. Ward examines the political nature of our postmodern world and calls the church to "perform Christ in every microcontext ... to recognize and own the politics of discipleship."

Migrations of the Holy: God, State and the Political Meaning of the Church by William T. Cavanaugh (Eerdmans, 2011, $18) is more accessible and urges Christians "not to invest the entirety of their political presence in [the 'powers and principalities' of our age]." TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Arva Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Leta Eichelberger, Lakewood, Colo.
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Rachel Graber, Parker, S.D.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Rachel Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Carolyn Hochstetler, Wellman, Iowa
Ray & Joyce Hofer, Freeman, S.D.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Willard Hunsberger, Goshen, Ind.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Stephen Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Richard & Shirley Mast, Graham, N.C.
Erma Maust, Sarasota, Fla.
Sharon Meyer, Moses Lake, Wash.
Crist Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Barbara Newcomer, Seville, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Mary Rhoade, Goshen, Ind.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Elvira Schierling, Denver, Colo.
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Karen Schmucker, Milford, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Peter Voran, North Newton, Kan.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Yoder, Huntington, Pa.
Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Joyce E. Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.

New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC

Sticking Points

Sticking Points, a novel by Shirley Kurtz. Anna's scattered memories coalesce into a gutsy critique of her church's narrative of redemptive violence. For anyone who has felt like the 'odd one out.'" —*Kirsten Beachey.* 268p $18.95

Storage Issues, poems, Susanne Kay Miller. "Might be Annie Dillard by way of Gerard Manley Hopkins . . . but in fact it's Miller." —*Albert Goldbarth.* 108p $12.95

STORAGE ISSUES
SUZANNE KAY MILLER

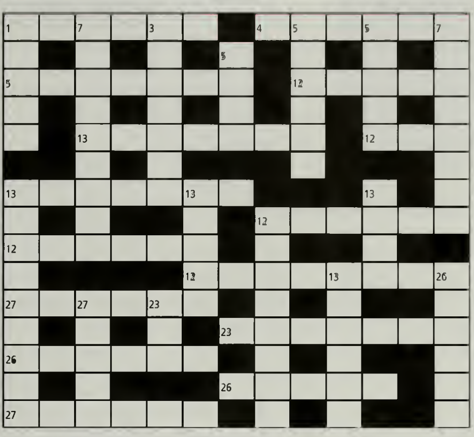
PEACE BE WITH YOU

Peace Be with You: Christ's Benediction Amid Violent Empires, ed. Sharon L. Baker, Michael Hardin. "Soul-satisfying responses to empire." —*J. Denny Weaver* 300p $23.95

Cascadia
www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

Bible bad guys

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. Israel's last king; he murdered Pekah (2 Ki. 15:30)
4. A Reubenite and son of Eliab who conspired against Moses and Aaron (Num. 16)
9. Israel's 17th king, who killed Shallum, and was cruel to the people of Tiphsah (2 Ki. 15:14-16)
10. Saul's ___-bearer refused to kill Saul with the sword but then killed himself (1 Chr. 10:5).
11. Ninth king of Judah who embraced the gods of Edom (2 Chr. 25:14)
12. Cain fled to this land after murdering Abel
13. She betrayed Samson.
16. Samson killed a thousand Philistines in ____ - Lehi with a donkey's jawbone (Jud. 15:17).
17. A priest of Baal (2 Ki. 11:18)
18. King Ahab's daughter who killed her grandsons to gain the throne (2 Ki. 11:2).
21. The Saul of the New Testament hailed from here (Acts 11:25).
24. This son of David tried to take the throne from his father.
25. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God __ ____…" (KJV).
26. Goliath's brother (1 Chr. 20:5)
27. She asked for the head of John the Baptist.

DOWN

1. He plotted against Mordecai and all the Jews (Es. 3).
2. He worked against Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls.
3. Son and successor of King Saul, also called Ishbosheth (1 Chr. 8:23)
5. Third king of the northern kingdom who murdered Nadab's family to become king
6. Israel was a part of this empire during the life of Jesus.
7. _____ -Baladan, a king of Babylon (Is.39:1)
8. Israel's sixth king, who was a commander under King Elah and took control from Zimri, then Tibni (1 Ki. 16:22)
13. A supporter of Diana (Artemis); he incited a riot against Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:24).
14. Jesus was first taken to this father-in-law of Caiaphas before his trial (John 18:13).
15. The father of Menahem, a cruel king of Israel (2 Ki. 15:14)
16. Son and successor of Solomon
19. Hosea named his second son this to show God's rejection of Israel (Hos. 1:9)
20. Colonists from this area worshiped an idol called Ashima (2 Ki. 17:30).
22. "Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her ___ provoked her till she wept…" (1 Sam. 1:7).
23. A gatekeeper and one of many men who married pagan wives during the captivity, then divorced them (Ez. 10:24)

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our August 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

July 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the puzzle can be found on page 57.

(Continued from page 5)

world, we are reduced to ecclesiastical topsy-turvydom.—*Frank Van Valin, Caseville, Mich.*

Concerning the February editorial: Some letter-writers rebutted possible defense of the use of alcohol. I questioned the late professor Howard Charles about Jesus' first miracle at Cana (John 1:3-11). He said that natural fermented grapes in Jesus' time had a lesser alcohol content than modern-made wines.

When 42-year-old Martin Luther married Katherine von Bora on June 27, 1525, he ordered one barrel of the best Corgall beer. Wedding priests included a barrel of Einbeck beer, wine. In those days traffic accidents from drunk drivers and broken homes were not a social problem like today.

John and Charles Wesley constantly carried fortified wine with them, since water supplies were frequently polluted. Past letters criticizing the moderate, controlled use of alcohol are still valid.—*Art Martin, Goshen, Ind.*

Editorial team responds

The February editorial was in response to letter-writers asking why we published an article about a winery in Virginia owned by a Mennonite couple without any editorial explanation or rationale. One of the responsibilities we carry as journalists is to report changes in the church, and the editorial did so. The editorial also opined that the legal and moderate use of alcohol is not something about which we need to divide. Many letters in response to the editorial addressed the *illegal* or *immoderate* use of alcohol; we agree that these are grave concerns.

Some readers criticized us for publishing the winery story because it gave free publicity to a private, for-profit company. While we do occasionally publish stories about private enterprise, we are careful to consider the news value against what some see as endorsement and free advertising. But the outpouring of responses—in the past decade no other article in *The Mennonite* generated as many letters—confirmed the news value of the winery story. We do not, however, expect to publish such a story again in the near future.—*Anna Groff, Gordon Houser, Everett Thomas*

Editorial is disheartening

Some days I wonder if there is a more frustrating magazine than *The Mennonite*—or perhaps it just so nicely captures my frustration with the Mennonite church—fitting for the "official" voice of Mennonite Church USA, I suppose.

I opened the May issue and read a lovely piece by Jenn Esbenshade ("A Letter to my Daughter"). Jenn encouraged her daughter to embrace a radical nonconformity, to resist those who want to turn her and her Christianity into something safe and non-threatening.

Then I read a disheartening editorial by Everett Thomas as a mouthpiece for Ervin Stutzman ("Unconventional Conventions"). It suggests the only reward for poor Jenn's daughter—should she take this advice—is when she grows up, she will be accused of damaging youth conventions beyond repair with her social advocacy and her "haunting."

Rather than blaming the young men and women who are taking to heart the Anabaptist tradition of protesting the injustices they see, perhaps the leaders of Mennonite Church USA should be actively engaging in and encouraging dialogue and teaching ourselves how to agree and disagree in love rather than using divisive language that just adds to the space between us.

As for Jenn's daughter, I hope it is the voice of her mother rather than of church leaders—even if that voice takes her to places the church and we in the church aren't quite ready to follow her to.—*LeAnne Zook, Washington, D.C.*

I was dismayed at the tone of Thomas' May editorial. I am galvanized to respond to the quote from Ervin Stutzman, included by Thomas, that unfairly misrepresents the Pink Mennos with a negative description that techniques they used have "come to haunt our church's most visible gathering."

I participated at our Columbus 2009 convention as a delegate and felt respect for the young adults who organized the Pink Menno witness there. I saw circles of Pink Mennos and other friends singing hymns of faith together and creating intentional gathering places for respectful dialogue.

For youth groups for whom homosexuality may be a new and uncomfortable issue, the presence of Pink Mennos created an opportunity for youth and sponsors to talk together about their questions and convictions as followers of Jesus. I did not experience or hear reports of Pink Mennos pressuring people to take up sides. Rather, I understood their presence at the Columbus convention as a way of expressing their love for the Mennonite church and of asking for their voices to be included and taken seriously.—*Tina Stoltzfus Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

My experience as a delegate to the 2009 convention in Columbus was contrary to the statement by Ervin Stutzman, as quoted by Everett Thomas in the May editorial. It was not the Pink Mennos who pressured me to take sides but a pastor who was then serving in Southeast Conference but since has relocated to the Midwest. At that time, I was serving on the Leadership Team of Southeast Conference, and he sought me out to object to my standing near the Pink Mennos, who were singing hymns outside the delegate meeting room. If I was "haunted" by anyone, it was by that conservative brother, not the advocates of social change.—*Eve MacMaster, Gainesville, Fla.*

Investing in Hope An answer for the hope inside us

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."
—1 Peter 3:15 (TNIV)

The Apostle Peter wrote to people who were enduring hard times. He encouraged them to take their suffering in stride, looking to Jesus for hope. Peter knew that people who lived with hope in the face of trouble would inevitably be queried about the reason for their positive outlook. He encouraged them to be ready to give an answer to those who asked.

Much of the modern church in America is weak and flabby when it comes to suffering for the sake of Christian faith. Followers of Jesus scramble alongside unbelieving neighbors to attain creature comforts and enjoy the supposedly good life to the full. Not exactly the kind of lifestyle that leads unbelievers to inquire about the reason for the hope that springs from within.

Yet in my travels, I often witness counter-signs indicating that people are seeking to follow a different path. I encounter congregations and conferences that are robustly missional in their Christian witness, openly declaring their hope in Christ. In this vein, I was strongly encouraged by my recent visit to Illinois Mennonite Conference (IMC).

IMC is one of the 21 area conferences in Mennonite Church USA. As the "pastor" of this group of churches, Chuck Neufeld wraps his arms of love around the diverse peoples that make up the conference. The theme of this year's conference, "Embrace—For the Glory of God (Abraza—para la Gloria de Dios)" (Romans 15:5-7), reflected his warm spirit of care.

The meeting was held in Cicero, Ill., an urban community of Chicago close to the Midway airport. A large Spanish-speaking congregation, Sonido de Alabanza (Sounds of Praise), hosted the meeting. They demonstrated the hospitality and efficiency that helps them touch nearly 1,000 people in ministry every week. In his message to the conference, pastor Esdras Ferreras spoke fluently in both Spanish and English, with an interpreter who easily adapted when he switched from one language to the other.

The assembly planners gave priority to worship, preaching and interaction, with a relatively small block of time given to business. They launched an experiment by which each congregation will visit and be visited by a sister congregation. I sensed an air of excitement about the plan.

What I will remember most is my participation in two of the three Sunday worship services at Sonido de Alabanza. The energetic worship was led by more than 20 musicians, singers and banner wavers, accompanied by dancers of all ages between the front row and the stage. Later, when Pastor Ferreras made his weekly statistical report, the congregation responded with applause. Among other numbers, he reported these:

New converts: 11;

Teams of three: 67 (teams of three believers, each praying for three unbelievers);

Potential cell group leaders in training: 86;

Street evangelism: 23 gave their lives to Christ;

Unbelievers for whom they are praying: 648;

Bible chapters read: 3,039;

People fasting: 169;

Daily devotional with their families: 235;

Personal ministry (supplying needs and praying for others): 294.

Founding Pastor Juan Ferreras attended all the services, greeting people and casting a father's eye over the time of ministry. Dubbed an apostle, he has helped start 50 daughter churches, most of them outside the United States.

This congregation, along with a nearby IMC church of the same size, Vida Abundante (Abundant Life), has much to teach us regarding the missional church.

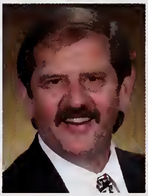
Perhaps God can use the rising interracial tensions in our nation to prompt diverse peoples within Mennonite Church USA to embrace one another to the glory of God. It could even prompt unbelievers to ask about the hope that lies inside us. May it be so. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Much of the modern church in America is weak and flabby when it comes to suffering for the sake of Christian faith.

*************************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 938 01-JAN-13 66994 P-2 P68
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 1851
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

The end of publishing in Scottdale



Everett J. Thomas

Actions taken by delegates at our biennial conventions have a direct effect on individual workers, their families and their communities. For example, former General Conference Mennonite Church members experienced this first hand over the last decade as staff and programs in the Newton, Kan., office have diminished since the merger of their conference with the former Mennonite Church.

Another example: In the former Mennonite Church, a 1971 action to create a General Board and Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries had a long-term but direct effect on Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) in Scottdale, Pa. (see cover photo). Forty years later, nearly to the month, that venerable publishing ministry will close its shop in Scottdale. A remnant of the staff will move to a new organization in Harrisonburg, Va., and the building is up for sale.

To mark the end of the publishing ministry in Scottdale, we asked historian John Sharp, former pastor at Scottdale Mennonite Church, to write a short history of that community's contribution to congregational and denominational life (see page 12). This piece touches briefly on some of the behind-the-scenes decision-making in the early 1970s that contributed to the demise of Mennonite Publishing House.

Seeds for an organization's demise are planted when things are going well.

Rachel Fisher, now retired and living in Goshen, Ind., was present as a minute-taker for most of the meetings preceding the delegate action in 1971. According to Fisher, an "umbrella" organization was needed to provide accountability for the two big agencies at that time (Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Ind., and Mennonite Publishing House) as well as the smaller Mennonite Board of Education, the fledgling Mennonite Mutual Aid organization and the newly formed Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM). The "program boards" needed this accountability because they were too autonomous, she says.

"It was a real blow [to Scottdale]," says Paul Lederach, who worked for years with Sunday curriculum at MPH, "when they took the General Board to Chicago and MBCM to Goshen."

Prior to this time, Scottdale was seen as the "capital" of the Mennonite Church. Top staff members for the denomination were there, the *Gospel Herald* was there, Sunday school curriculum was there, and the national Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) office was there. Within six months after the delegate action in 1971, several of these leadership offices were taken away.

Publishing in Scottdale continued for 40 years but slowly, on a downward trend. There were additional reasons for its trajectory: Print publishing declined as fewer congregations used curriculum created by our denomination. Financial misadventures cost the publishing house both money and credibility. During merger discussions in the 1990s, MPH's initial resistance to merging with the Commission on Education's Faith & Life Press left the church wondering about things like dueling youth curricula from the two publishing entities.

Others have pointed out that the seeds for an organization's demise are planted when things are going well. Similarly, seeds for success are planted when an organization is in trouble. Some of the most important seeds are the actions taken by delegates to change our denominational structure. If delegates to Pittsburgh 2011 take an action that alters the current structure, we know such an action will have a direct effect on individuals, families and communities. The effect, however, may take 40 years to become obvious.—*ejt*

Disclaimer: Everett Thomas served as Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries president from 1989-2000.

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02004434 4

10 years later...

Merger leaders Dorothy Nickel Friesen and John Murray

July 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- To obey or not to obey
- The power of the nonshootout
- Stewards of grace
- Christian mission is not exotic
- Freedom Riders remind us of racism
- Editorial: The Pittsburgh experiment

Everence

Photo: Claybottom Farms, Goshen, Ind. by John Tirotta

Let's grow together

See us at Pittsburgh 2011 and learn more about our new name and how our roots in the Mennonite Church remain the same. We are pleased to sponsor Pastors Day and present workshops to help you integrate your faith and finances – whatever your age. Stop by our exhibit to learn more or simply sit and relax.

Join us for Bridges to (the) Cross, as we strengthen our beliefs, together.

A ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches

Everence offers banking products that are federally insured. We also offer securities and other products that are not NCUA insured, may involve loss of principal, and have no credit union guarantee. Not all products are available in all states.

2110722

TheMennonite July 2011 | Volume 14, Number 7

CONTENTS

JUN 30 2011

12 **10 years later**
—Everett J. Thomas

17 **To obey or not to obey**
—Martha Yoder Maust

21 **A witness to war**
—Doug Schirch

24 **The power of the nonshootout**
—L. Lamar Nisly

27 **Love the church**
—Jeremy Shue and Sherah-Leigh Gerber

30 **Blessings**
—Ben Kreider

32 **Stewards of grace**
—Marty Troyer

37 **MCC Binational to disband in 2012**—Henry Neufeld

38 **Goshen College reverses anthem decision**
—Everett J. Thomas

40 **Fewer churches leaving Mennonite Church USA**—Paul Schrag

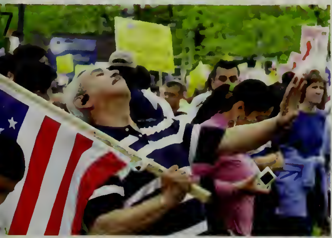
42 **'Peace Pastor' blog reaches thousands**
—Anna Groff

45 **South African elder celebrates learning**
—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

46 **Noticed and welcomed or invisible and lonely?**—Cindy Massanari Breeze

50 **MC Canada to consider sexual inclusivity**
—Rachel Bergen

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART
IN



ON THE COVER: Photo by Vada Snider

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
52 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
July 2011 | Volume 14, Number 7

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46.00 to U.S. addresses and $54.00 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: **Everett J. Thomas**
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Gordon Houser**
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: **Anna Groff**
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: **Rebecca Helmuth**
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: **Celina Romero**
Editorial assistant: **Nora Miller**
Design: **Dee Birkey**

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Pink Mennos and conventions

How wonderful of *The Mennonite* to carry two powerful essays on the role that subversive women have played in shaping our faith story ("Wise Men and Subversive Women" and "Subversive Mothers in the Genealogy of Jesus," May). These authors rightly praise the way the biblical tradition upholds the marginalized as central bearers of God's good news—news that continues to haunt our hearts. How puzzling, then, that the closing editorial chose to single out a group of marginalized young people (Pink Mennos) as subverting the work of the church. In generations to come, might they be the very ones we praise and uphold as central bearers of God's good news—news that continues to haunt our hearts? *—Joel Miller, Cincinnati*

I look forward to attending the Mennonite Church USA convention in Pittsburgh. I was disappointed to read the editorial in the May issue that suggests Pink Mennos caused serious problems at the convention in Columbus. They have been grossly misrepresented by those who are afraid Mennonite Church USA may become inclusive of sexual minorities.

At Columbus 2009, I heard many positive comments about the respectful, nonconfrontational behavior of this group. I did witness several encounters by youth pastors confronting these people in a disrespectful manner at the MennoNeighbors booth. I also witnessed two young Pink Mennos being accosted and verbally abused in the empty concourse one night.

As an 80-year-old grandmother, I will take my stand with the marginalized, hoping to see a Mennonite church that welcomes all to the table in my lifetime.*—Ruby Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Regarding the May editorial: It is hypocritical to criticize youth for employing "techniques of social advocacy and confrontation" that we would be most happy to see them use in another context, such as an antiwar protest. At many mainline Protestant church conventions, the protests are much less respectful. At Columbus 2009, there were hymn sings and colored clothing rather than incendiary banners or angry rallies. It was uniquely Mennonite. We should teach our youth how to respectfully express disagreement and how to be in dialogue with differing viewpoints. What is it we teach our youth by splitting the convention in an attempt to shut down dialogue? Maybe we should spend less time trying to silence them and more time truly listening to what they're trying to teach us. Let he who has ears hear.*—Reuben Alexander, Washington, D.C.*

Spaulding dismissal

Editor's note: See page 43 for a Mennonite Church USA Communiqué on Randall Spaulding's dismissal from the Binational Worship Council.

I have appreciated Ervin Stutzman's columns, in which he often argues eloquently for "diversity" within the church, claiming that diversity is a gift, not a curse, in the church. In the May issue he goes further than just affirming "the gift of diversity." He argues that sometimes we are called upon to "put up with" those who are not like us, buttressing his argument with the words of Jesus and Paul. He writes, "Perhaps we too readily hang our

(Continued on page 62)

Stutzman responds to concerns about language

The editor invited me to respond to a number of readers who were upset by my words about Pink Mennos, quoted in the June editorial. First, I will quote the two paragraphs from my April report to the Executive Board from which the quotation was taken:

"As I travel across the church, I discover there are radically different feelings about the upcoming convention. Some voice a strong enthusiasm for the event, while others voice a strong sense of dread. The experience with Pink Mennos at Columbus in 2009 introduced a new level of engagement in controversial matters, spreading the level of dissatisfaction from the usual complaints about the content of particular seminars or worship services to include painful encounters in the hallways and display booths. The techniques for social advocacy and confrontation that we have taught young adults in our schools have come to haunt our church's most visible gathering, to the end that convention-goers feel immense pressure to take up sides against one another on the most divisive issue in the modern church in America. The youth convention particularly feels the pressure with the withdrawal of some of the largest youth groups who regularly attend the biennial convention.

"I pray that the prayerful atmosphere in the Conversation Room can help alleviate the pressure and sense of dread that some people feel about the meeting in Pittsburgh. We need the presence of the Spirit to help us love one another, even when we disagree. And we need to spend most of our time discussing the matters on which we have the deepest agreement."

When I spoke of that which "haunts" our convention, I was referring to the complaints and unhappy memories of Columbus 2009 that some have communicated to me. There are others in our church who were delighted by the creative activities of Pink Mennos, grateful that young adults take such interest in the church. We must not blame Pink Mennos for using techniques of social advocacy and confrontation taught them by the church. Since the days of Martin Luther King Jr., our church has embraced the call to social advocacy and defense of civil rights. I have chronicled this development in my new book, *From Nonresistance to Justice: Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric 1908-2008.*

What haunts our convention now is the way the issue of gay rights is deeply dividing our church. We must draw on other traditions taught in our schools—that of biblical interpretation, conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The Conversation Room has been designed to do the latter two. May God help us in that quest.—*Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA executive director*

IN THIS ISSUE

Ten years ago this month, a formal action created Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada out of three predecessor denominations. We mark this anniversary with commentary from the two people at the center of the merger process. Pastors Dorothy Nickel Friesen and John C. Murray are introduced on page 12. Then they respond to questions about the merger process with some candid answers (page 14).

Two other pieces in this issue are related to Mennonite Church USA's last decade: "Fewer Churches Leave MC USA" (page 40) is reprinted with permission from *Mennonite Weekly Review*. The editorial (page 64) takes a look at what leaders expected 2011 to look like back in 2001 and reasons why none of those aspirations came to fruition (page 64).

Martha Yoder Maust takes another look at Romans 13 with her article "To Obey or Not to Obey" the government (page 17). In "A Witness to War," Doug Shirch says, "The patriotic argument always begins with love (for country) but inevitably demands our acquiescence for doing things to outsiders that is criminal behavior in our own country" (page 21).

Several institutions in Goshen, Ind., had experiences in the last month that relate directly to patriotism. The Goshen College board of directors reversed its March 2010 decision to play the national anthem before athletics events and was punished by many in the secular media (page 38). Meanwhile, Bethany Christian Schools decided to put U.S. flags in each classroom and create a daily opportunity for its students to say the Pledge of Allegiance. These changes are required for any private school wishing to receive Indiana's tuition vouchers, new for the 2011-2012 school year (page 39).

The news section also carries our second Communiqué from Mennonite Church USA Executive Board staff (page 43). This one provides the official explanation of Randall Spaulding's dismissal from the binational worship council.—*Editor*

Miller named secretary of Global Christian Forum

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—The Global Christian Forum (GCF) has appointed Larry Miller to become its first full-time secretary when he completes nearly 22 years as the general secretary of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

Miller will begin officially with the GCF on Jan. 1, 2012, at the same time that César García, MWC's next general secretary, assumes the position after a time of transition.

"My rootedness will remain in the Anabaptist-Mennonite communion and in relationships with you," Miller wrote to his MWC colleagues in the wake of the GCF's invitation. He noted that for several years he had felt an interest and call toward involvement in the GCF. "My hope is that the Anabaptist communion, including you, can view me as one sent also on your behalf."

The GCF, formed in 1998, is a growing global initiative that seeks to bring leaders of all Christian churches in the world together to foster mutual respect and to address common challenges. —*MWC*

Mennonites speak at peace convocation

KINGSTON, Jamaica—Two Mennonites, Thomas Finger and Lisa Schirch, made presentations on May 23 at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston.

Finger's workshop, titled "Peace: the Lens for Re-visioning Christian Theology and Mission," explored his views about peace, justice, salvation, sin and Jesus' mission.

In a section titled "Not Only," he explored classic theological assumptions. In another part called "But Also" he said, "Sin is not only the personal breaking of divine laws, but also the corporate turning away from and losing sight of God, peace and justice."

He is a professor of church history and world religions.

In a panel discussion, Lisa Schirch, professor of peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., pointed out that governments tend to attempt to justify large-scale military action—at its worst, nuclear warfare—in the name of "security." She called into question what security should mean to Christians.

"Jesus doesn't use the word 'security.' The language of the church is much more about justice and peace than about security," she said.—*World Council of Churches*

Youth sentenced in death of Mennonite volunteer

ALAMOSA, Colo.—A teen who pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide in the traffic death of a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker was sentenced June 14 to two years probation and 45 days in detention.

District Judge Martin Gonzales went against the wishes of the victim's family with the detention term for Kyle Stotsky, 16, and argued that his sentence needed to serve as a deterrence to others in the community.

Last Oct. 24, Stotsky hit cyclist Chloe Weaver from behind while driving. The boy then fled the accident but was tracked to his home by authorities later that evening. Weaver, 20, died at the scene.

The judge praised Weaver's family, noting that he all too often sees victims' families so consumed by hate and vengeance that they are blind to anything else. "They have been your guardian angels in this process," he told Stotsky.

Herm Weaver said his daughter would have called on Stotsky to live his life honestly and to take responsibility for his actions.—*Pueblo Chieftain*

photo provided

50 miles to fight poverty

Eric Massanari, pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., runs along a 50-mile trail May 14 near Lawrence, Kan., to raise money for Circles of Hope, a program that works to help people out of poverty. He raised more than $2,225.—*Gordon Houser*

Settlers injure 9-year-old Palestinian with stones

HEBRON/AL-KHALIL, West Bank—On June 2, two boys, residents of the Beit Hadassah settlement in Hebron's Old City, ages 14 and 15, threw stones at Palestinians walking in the market below. Some of the rocks were as large as five inches. A 9-year-old Palestinian boy was struck with two stones, causing a head injury that splattered the sidewalk with blood. An ambulance rushed the boy to the hospital.

An Israeli soldier stationed beside the settlement had neither tried to stop the boys nor take any action against them after they hurled the stones. An Israeli policeman later called on a Palestinian resident who saw much of the incident, and took information to investigate further.—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

Anabaptist Network of North America launched

ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.—Cofounder Tom Airey announced in May the launching of the Anabaptist Net-

MCC photo by Silas Crews

MCC reaches out to Haitian immigrants

Mennonite Central Committee East Coast immigration counselor Sara Mateo-Deo (right) confers with client Emmanuel Limonta. Mateo-Deo meets with immigrants each Thursday at this small storefront beside the First Haitian Church of the Brethren in Brooklyn, N.Y.—*MCC*

work of North America. ANNA seeks to provide "a point of entry for jaded and lamenting Christians who seek to identify, belong and commit to a wider movement alternative to 'accommodated Christianity' largely ordered around personal piety and future salvation."

ANNA also facilitates partnerships among local worshipping communities "by sharing resources and collaborating in the heavy lifting of God's reign: the hard and holy work of releasing peace on earth. [And] ANNA provides a brainstorming session for North American Anabaptists (like our global counterparts) who, over time, solidify core convictions that we commit to embodying on this accommodated continent."

For more information, go to anabaptistnetwork.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network.—*ANNA*

MDS responds to many tornados this spring

LITITZ, Pa.—Tornados struck with unusual frequency and ferocity this spring. Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) executive director Kevin King has tracked the "dizzying array of storm reports that came in almost daily in April and May."

By June 7, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported 525 fatalities nationwide, the highest death toll from tornados since the NOAA began gathering statistics in 1950 and well above the annual average of 80 tornado-related deaths.

MDS units and regions have reported on responses in the following locations: Pulaski, Va.; Tushka, Okla.; Bertie County, N.C.; Birmingham, Hackleburg and Phil Campbell, Ala.; Reading, Kan.; Joplin, Mo.; and Oklahoma City.—*MDS*

Hesston College dorm furniture helps others

HESSTON, Kan.—As Hesston College students graduated May 8 and headed home for the summer, they embodied the college's motto of "Start Here, Go Everywhere." On May 10, students loaded dorm furniture into a semi for donation in Waco, Texas.

For 42 years students used the beds, dressers, mirrors, desks and chairs, but as the college prepared to renovate the dorm rooms this summer, the old furniture needed a new home.

Hesston College facilities employee and project organizer Tim Goering had a connection with an organization in Waco that had a need, "and things fell into place better than we hoped."

Goering's cousin, Kathy Reid, is the executive director for the Family Abuse Center (FAC) in Waco, one of the organizations to receive the furniture. The center assists victims of domestic violence by sheltering those seeking an escape and providing education and intervention to prevent abuse. On any given night, the shelter houses 40 to 75 residents, predominately women and children.

FAC operates a targeted housing program for shelter residents to eventually move into their own homes. The organization provides basic furniture for furnishing the new residences, so Hesston College's donation of 152 dressers, more than 100 beds and mirrors, 20 desks and 15 love seats was welcomed.—*Hesston College*

MHS Alliance, Everence to share offices

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Health Services (MHS) Alliance has signed a lease agreement to move its Goshen office to the Everence corporate office building in Goshen, beginning July 1.

Seven MHS Alliance staff members and two consulting associates will relocate to North Main Street. Rick Stiffney, MHS Alliance president and CEO, says "this is a wonderful opportunity to pursue new possibilities between two organizations that serve as ministries of Mennonite Church USA and other Anabaptist denominations."
—*Mennonite Church USA*

Registration numbers for Pittsburgh 2011

Adults: 2,082
Youth and sponsors: 3,584
Junior youth and sponsors: 194
K-5: 171
Preschool: 53
Infants: 55
Total: 6,139

There is a time for departure

Ron Adams will become pastor at Madison (Wis.) Mennonite Church next month.

There is a time for departure, even when there's no certain place to go.—Tennessee Williams

These words have been my screen saver for the last year. Whenever I stop typing for a few minutes, they scroll across the screen. They remind me that I am in an in-between place. They orient me. The time for departure is coming.

In August, I will have been at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., for 13 years. For the last three years, I have been aware of a growing restlessness. When is it time to leave a congregation? How will I know it is time? And, if I leave, where will I go?

After many months of prayer, conversation and meetings with my spiritual director, I became convinced that the restlessness and the questions had their source in God. The Spirit was inviting me to something new. Only recently did I discover what and where that new thing is.

None of this is easy. Our family has roots in the congregation. Roots that have developed and deepened over 13 years of life together. Our sons grew up at East Chestnut Street. It's the only congregation they know.

Marilou and I did some growing up, too. All of it under the tender care of an extraordinary community—the kind of community that pastors dream of serving. It's a strong, wise, capable and compassionate community whose love and support have never wavered, despite my all-too-frequent blunders. Even now, as our relationship is ending, the folks at East Chestnut Street keep extending their love and good wishes to us, graceful to the end. No, leaving here is not easy.

Here's the thing: All that language we use about God's faithfulness and God's presence and God's companionship? It's all true.

But there is a time for departure. And so the Spirit is calling us to Madison, Wis. I will serve as pastor at Madison Mennonite Church. We are eager to begin this new leg of the journey and to find community in a new place. We are ready to find a home at Madison Mennonite.

In the meantime, we inhabit an in-between place. Still connected to East Chestnut Street. Still enjoying both the work and the congregation. But beginning the process of becoming connected to Madison Mennonite. Learning what's happening there and what makes them tick and slowly shifting our feet from one place to the next. It's a strange and sometimes awkward place to stand.

What makes this awkward stance tolerable is an abiding awareness of God's companionship. The transition ahead will be hard, we know. Saying goodbye to people we've fallen in love with is not easy. It's an ending, and endings require grieving.

Finding our way in a new community is also hard. It's a beginning, and beginnings require patience. Grieving and patience walking together. Not the most comfortable partnership.

But God keeps reminding our family that we are not alone in this in-between place. Our sisters and brothers in Lancaster and Madison are right there with us. And so is God. Faithful and true companions on the journey through this in-between landscape. Without such companions, I'm not sure we'd make it. With them, I know we'll not only make it but will also be cared for every step of the way.

Here's the thing: All that language we use about God's faithfulness and God's presence and God's companionship? It's all true. We may not always believe it. We may not always be aware of it. We may not always welcome it. But God is faithful. And God is present. And God is our companion all the way.

Through all the discernment and all the changes and all the worries about taking this step, God's abiding presence has been so clear. When all I knew was that it was time to go, even though I didn't know where, God was with me. And now, when I know exactly when I am leaving and when I am starting and where we are going, God is with me. God is with us.

The goodbye is awfully hard. The hello comes with a big learning curve. But I know we can make this transition. Because God is with us. Thanks be to God. TM

Rain

by Regina Murray Brault

In seven days
we'll call this last July,
and still the prairie grass
stands higher than the faded corn.

My daughter's once-a-farmhouse
occupies high ground
overlooking Granger, Iowa
where twin water towers
labeled—HOT
and COLD
in block print red and blue
attest to Midwest humor
that has a way of sneaking up on you
like the daddy-long-legs
who crosses a patch of parched garden
to wear my empty sandal.

Three lightning rods
straddle the peak of the pointed roof
appearing to challenge God.
We watch the sky—
searching the horizon for thunderheads
to spark the metal.

This time last year
we spread out blueprints
from her husband's flooded office
in Des Moines
across the split-rail fence
to dry.
Today we draw a carefully constructed plan
scaled in inches—
a prayer for rain

but not too much.

Regina Murray Brault lives in
Burlington, Vt.

Selective secrecy about drone warfare

War reporting has changed over the decades, with the military usually trying to hide what they're doing from the press—or else making sure the reporting is spun positively—all in the name of what's good for the nation.

During the Iraq War, the military introduced "embedding," in which reporters became part of certain groups of troops. This increased reporters' sympathy toward the soldiers but also limited their access to stories that might not be positive toward the military's actions. The growing use of drones (remote-controlled planes), particularly in Afghanistan, is one attempt to control war reporting by making military actions as secret as possible.

Tara McKelvey discusses this in her article "Coving Obama's Secret War" in *Columbia Journalism Review* (May/June). She writes that journalists "have not succeeded in digging down to basic questions about drone attacks: How are targets chosen? Under what legal authority? How successful are drones in killing enemies and sparing civilians? Are the drones helping win the war against would-be terrorists?"

According to the New America Foundation, writes McKelvey, President Barack Obama has authorized 193 drone strikes in Pakistan since he took office in 2009.

Jane Mayer, a writer for the *New Yorker*, published a story in October 2009 that said the Predators (drones) were "much more than just a breakthrough in technology—they were also a new frontier legally, politically and morally." When the CIA is asked directly about its role in gathering the information the drones use for targeting, it denies having one, said Mayer.

Gene Stoltzfus, founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams who died on March 10, 2010, wrote about the moral question in a Feb. 25, 2010, blog collected in the book *Create Space for Peace: Forty Years of Peacemaking* (TriMark Press, 2011).

The blog discusses "robotic technology now being developed to make modern warfare 'safer' for soldiers but, inevitably, more lethal for civilians." The lethality is not just inevitable but actual. Stoltzfus notes that "people on the ground in Pakistan told me that just 10 percent of Predator drone bombings are insurgent combatants; 90 percent are civilians."

"When the Western media do cover drone strikes that miss any high-value targets—and which, consequently, no U.S. official is willing to discuss—" McKelvey writes, "their stories are thin." The Pakistani media, on the other hand, provides plenty of details.

Three days after Obama was sworn in as president, his administration launched its first drone strike, according to numerous news reports. News reports about the attack, which reportedly hit a house that was a Taliban hideout, had conflicting details.

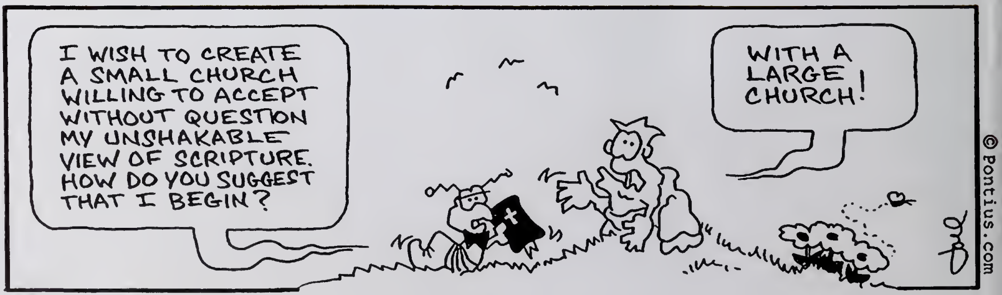
The news articles from U.S. sources mentioned only briefly that the drone struck the wrong target. The homeowner had been a tribal elder who had attempted to organize a peace movement to fight extremism. "The deaths of the father and others, along with the property destruction, left the family, including an 18-year-old son, destitute," McKelvey writes. "The teenager called for revenge."

These details were not gathered by reporters but by a human-rights investigator, Chris Rogers.

A larger question than reporting on drone strikes, according to Stoltzfus, is the growth of robotic warfare. He writes: "The absence of meaningful work for many in this generation may become the void where new waves of imagination in the service of violence are unleashed."
—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I WISH TO CREATE A SMALL CHURCH WILLING TO ACCEPT WITHOUT QUESTION MY UNSHAKABLE VIEW OF SCRIPTURE. HOW DO YOU SUGGEST THAT I BEGIN?
WITH A LARGE CHURCH!
Joel
© Pontius.com

> “If current education criteria were applied to medicine, hospitals would be closed if any patients died in 2014; doctors would be fired or their salaries cut if patient outcomes did not climb each year, and there would be one narrow medical measurement to determine this.”—*John Richard Schrock in the* Wichita Eagle

How to revive the economy

“The best way to revive the economy is not to cut the federal deficit right now,” argues Robert Reich in his blog in February. “It’s to put more money into the pockets of average working families. Not until they start spending again big time will companies begin to hire again big time.” Big American companies are sitting on almost $2 trillion of cash because there aren’t enough customers to buy additional goods and services. “The only people with money are the richest 10 percent whose stock portfolios have been roaring back to life, but their spending isn’t enough to spur much additional hiring.” How to get money into the pockets of average working families? asks Reich. Progressive taxation. The lion’s share of America’s income and wealth is at the top. “Taxing the very rich won’t hurt the economy. They spend a much smaller portion of their incomes than everyone else,” he writes. Average families need to have enough to spend to get the economy moving again.

Bank of America?

- Bank of America’s 2009 pretax income: **$4.4 billion**
- Amount Bank of America paid in taxes in 2009: **$0**
- Number of foreign tax havens Bank of America used in 2009: **115**
- Percentage of Americans who want to end tax cuts for the richest Americans: **59**

—*Yes! Magazine*

Beware of prognosticators

Students at Hamilton College analyzed prognostications by 26 political and economic pundits during a 16-month period in 2007-2008 to see how accurate they were. They concluded that only nine of the pundits were more accurate than the flip of a coin, two were much less accurate, and the remaining 15 were statistically as reliable as a coin toss. Princeton economist Paul Krugman, columnist for the *New York Times*, came out on top. The worst prognosticator was conservative columnist Cal Thomas.—*Christian Century*

The Jews and Pope Paul II

When the Vatican beatifies someone and places the person just one step away from sainthood, it usually attracts scant attention among Jews because it is correctly perceived as an internal church process. But the recent beatification—and likely canonization—of the late Pope John Paul II is different; the Jewish community remembers the Polish-born Karol Wojtyla as the best pope the Jews ever had.—*Religion News Service*

A quiz on the Bible and sex

1. The Bible’s position on abortion is:
    a. Never mentioned.
    b. To forbid it along with all forms of artificial birth control.
    c. Condemnatory, except to save the life of the mother.
2. The Bible suggests “marriage” is:
    a. The lifelong union of one man and one woman.
    b. The union of one man and up to 700 wives.
    c. Often undesirable, because it distracts from service to the Lord.
3. The Bible says of homosexuality:
    a. Leviticus describes male sexual pairing as an abomination.
    b. A lesbian should be stoned at her father’s doorstep.
    c. There’s plenty of ambiguity and no indication of physical intimacy, but some readers point to Ruth and Naomi’s love as suspiciously close, or to King David declaring to Jonathan: “Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” (2 Samuel 1:23-26)
4. In the Bible, erotic writing is:
    a. Forbidden by Deuteronomy as “adultery of the heart.”
    b. Exemplified by “Song of Songs,” which celebrates sex for its own sake.
    c. Unmentioned.
5. Jesus says that divorce is permitted:
    a. Only after counseling and trial separation.
    b. Never.
    c. Only to men whose wives have been unfaithful.
6. Among sexual behavior that is forbidden is:
    a. Adultery.
    b. Incest.
    c. Sex with angels.
7. The people of Sodom were condemned principally for:
    a. Homosexuality.
    b. Blasphemy.
    c. Lack of compassion for the poor and needy.

Answers:
1. A. 2. A, B and C. 3. A and C. 4. B. 5. B and C. 6. A, B and C. 7. C.—*New York Times*

10 years later

As co-chairs of the integration committee, Dorothy Nickel Friesen and John C. Murray played key roles in the process.

by Everett J. Thomas

Ten years ago, delegates to General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) gatherings voted to create Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The process leading up to this vote—first called "merger," then "integration" and finally "transformation"—was coordinated by the Integration Committee. Pastors Dorothy Nickel Friesen and John C. Murray co-chaired the committee, which did its work from 1995 to 1999. A decade later, we asked these leaders about that process and where Mennonite Church USA, in particular, finds itself now (see page 14).

Mennonite Church

John C. Murray and Dorothy Nickel Friesen.
Photo by Vada Snider

During most dimensions of the merger process, church politics required dual leadership on such committees. Nickel Friesen was GC, at the time senior pastor at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio. Murray was MC, at the time pastor of Emma Mennonite Church in Topeka, Ind. But each had a long history of conference and denominational leadership before being tapped for the Integration Committee.

Nickel Friesen, originally from Mountain Lake, Minn., served as a pastor in several congregations and an administrator at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., beginning in 1982. From 1983 to 1989, she was a member of the GC Commission on Home Ministries and served as its chair the last three years. She preached at churchwide conventions in 1993, 1999 and 2003 and taught seminars at the 1983, 1986, 1989, 2007 and 2009 conventions. Prior to her work on the Integration Committee, she published eight articles in *The Mennonite*'s predecessor publications, *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* (GC).

Nickel Friesen is now retired. But after her stint with the Integration Committee, she moved to Newton, Kan., where she served as conference minister for Western District Conference from 2003 to 2010. She is married to Richard Friesen; they have two adult children and two grandchildren. She says her hobbies include reading, seeing movies, eating chocolate and “taking afternoon naps—especially on Sunday.”

Nickel Friesen is quick to point out that the decision to form Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada came to fruition after decades of work.

“One of the historical notes [for] newcomers,” she says, “is the ongoing, intentional dialogue regarding integration that the Integration Committee inherited: Integration Exploration Committee (after Bethlehem ’83), the two-country structure committees that worked during 1997-1999. … There were many consultations. … In short, [the] Integration Committee had many groups working and reporting and planning and proposing. My stack of Integration Committee papers is over a foot tall.”

Nickel Friesen uses a metaphor to describe the nature of the Integration Committee: “I compared the Integration Committee to the antennae of a caterpillar, the head of the caterpillar as the general boards and then all the segments of the caterpillar as various parts of the church moving at their own pace. The Integration Committee surveyed the landscape and kept moving to a new reality, and other parts of the church sometimes followed but at slightly different angles and speed.”

> I compared the Integration Committee to the antennae of a caterpillar, the head of the caterpillar as the general boards and then all the segments of the caterpillar as various parts of the church moving at their own pace.
> —Dorothy Nickel Friesen

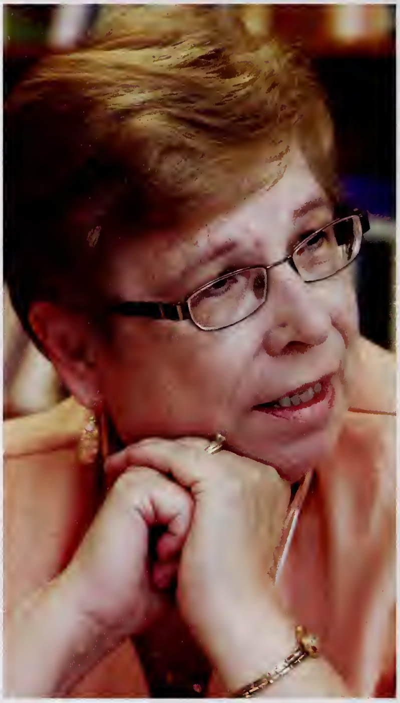
John Murray, originally from Kouts, Ind., has been in pastoral leadership since 1982. He served as president of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference from 1991 to 1994 and preached at the churchwide convention in 1999. He also had published four articles in *Gospel Herald* before beginning as Integration Committee co-chair and was an occasional chapel speaker at Mennonite colleges.

In 1999, at the end of the Integration Committee assignment, John moved to Hesston, Kan., where he continues to serve as lead pastor at Hesston Mennonite Church. He has also taught several classes and been a guest lecturer at Hesston College. One of his passions is Menno Clinic in Andra Pradesh, India, where John is a charter member of the board of directors. John is married to Krista A. Miller Murray, and they have three children.

John is quick to point out that he and Nickel Friesen may have been the co-chairs of the Integration Committee, but they were not afforded much leadership authority. He describes their role as facilitators to let changes happen while others made decisions.

Q&A: Dorothy and John

'New' Mennonites are attracted to Mennonite Church USA because of its Anabaptist core beliefs—not because of former structures.
—Dorothy Nickel Friesen



1. What was it like to facilitate the merger/integration process from 1995-1999?

Dorothy: It was enormously complex and complicated. The Integration Committee (IC) was to "guide and monitor" the process, which meant immense data collection, endless conversations that both respected the past but prodded toward a new future. The expectations were high; the learning curve equally high; the opportunity to interact with people across the denomination—priceless.

John: I am grateful for the experiences and relationships that were forged on the journey of leadership of the IC. Staff changes in executive leadership of both the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church in the midst of our work shifted our focus and way of working in the middle of the process. A further challenge was operating without a clear budget for the process.

2. An oft-stated goal during the late 1990s was for us to move to a Mennonite Church USA identity from identities as members of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC). Has that happened?

John: While a new identity has not fully developed, the former GC and MC identities are fading due to the passage of time, the presence of new leaders and new shared experiences. Giving more attention to a healthy grieving process may have been helpful in letting go of the former identities. The former identities remain stronger in conferences that did not integrate.

Organizational structure is important, but it cannot create a compelling identity. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, applied as an identity, becomes a creed rather than a confession. Vision: Healing and Hope, applied as an identity rather than a calling, sounds like an untrue statement rather than an invitation to growth.

I advocate an identity of grace-filled communities of love as outlined in Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love. Vision: Healing and Hope is our purpose. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* is a guide in ongoing discernment. Organizational structures facilitate our relationships in order to fulfill our purpose.

Dorothy: For those areas of Mennonite Church USA where "both" identities are present, there are continuing historical realities and memories that shape the present understanding of being part of the new denomination. "New" Mennonites are attracted to Mennonite Church USA because of its Anabaptist core beliefs—not because of former structures. Unfortunately, stereotypes instead of values of "GC" and "MC" still inform our conversations and deter us from proclaiming our Christian identities in an increasingly post-Christendom environment.

3. There was an assumption before 2001 that area conferences would merge or be transformed in some way. That has not happened for most conferences east of the Rocky Mountains. What were your responsibilities as facilitators to work with area conferences?

Dorothy: Actually, it was the impulse of congregations "merging" since the late 1960s that spurred area conferences to begin intentional conversations about integration. Meanwhile, both MC and GC program agencies had multiple programmatic integrated efforts. However, the mandate to the IC was to deal with denominational agenda (name, publication, General Board integration); we were not to deal with area conferences at all—and we didn't.

(A note: Central Plains Mennonite Conference is east of the Rockies and is an integrated area conference.)

John: The IC was charged with the task of bringing together the MC and GC general boards and agencies. It was never its mandate to reshape the structures of conferences with new geographic boundaries. Conferences were expected to engage in their own journeys of discernment regarding integration. Prior to integration, the Mennonite Church included conferences with overlapping geography.

4. Before merger/integration, the assumption was that Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA would remain one denomination in North America. There now is little connection between the two other than by national staffs. Was this separation inevitable?

John: The Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church were binational organizations with a dominant U.S. agenda. The establishment of two national structures was intended to create equitable national structures in order to facilitate the unique agenda of the church in each national context and create equal conversation partners for a binational agenda.

The degree of separation that has developed between Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada is one of my greatest laments of the integration process. At the time of the formation of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada there was a commitment that the 2007 Convention would be a joint convention of the United States and Canada and be held in Canada. This is one of the practical commitments to ongoing meaningful relationship that was abandoned.

Dorothy: No. We simply failed miserably in this area. The IC discussed and seriously considered a "regional paradigm" with four regions—one being Canada. That got no traction. Finally, the 100-year history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada gave it a head start for missional agenda, whereas the U.S. country agenda is still struggling for comprehensive unity (not uniformity). If we do not have joint delegate assemblies, there will be little connection with, appreciation for or learning from each other. This is one of my deepest regrets about IC work—and subsequent lack of Mennonite Church USA's commitment for binational linkages.

5. What are the current weaknesses of Mennonite Church USA?

Dorothy: Failure to articulate Anabaptist core beliefs, legalism and the practicing of punitive discipline (even excommunication), few gifted women in major leadership positions, consumerism, lack of nonviolent pacifism, general lack of inertia concerning peace and justice, loss of population in the Midwest, lack of stewardship of finances and the environment.

John: I lament the focus on organizational structure, as if restructuring will transform hearts and minds. I lament that "missional" is often a

Vision: Healing and Hope, applied as an identity rather than a calling, sounds like an untrue statement rather than an invitation to growth.
—John Murray

A timeline of Mennonite Church/General Conference Mennonite Church integration

1983	1989	1995	1999	2001	2002
MC and GC hold joint assembly in Bethlehem, Pa.	MC and GC hold joint assembly in Normal, Ill.	After joint assembly in Wichita, Kan., Integration Committee forms	Integration Committee completes its work.	Delegates at Nashville, Tenn., agree to form Mennonite Church USA.	Mennonite Church USA begins on Feb. 1.

buzz word rather than a passionate commitment. I lament that the document Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love is largely unknown and too often not practiced in our relationships. I lament the ongoing tendency to be a closed, ethnically defined community rather than an open community defined by shared spiritual values of love, joy, peace and patience.

I hope we can embrace conversations that make us uncomfortable, allowing questions and doubts within the context of loving communities.—John Murray

6. —the strengths?

John: I celebrate our commitment to and efforts regarding antiracism. I celebrate our historic and ongoing commitment to a lived faith in humility and service. And I celebrate our willingness to wrestle with the difficult and complex issues of our day without needing to formulate resolutions of agreement. (This is an affirmation of "The Pittsburgh Experiment.")

Dorothy: The growth of urban congregations both in progressive theology and new ethnicities; the plethora of Anabaptist resources, including outstanding Mennonite colleges and seminaries; "new" Mennonites; increased numbers of women pastors; excellent spiritual foundational commitments expressed in such documents as *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (not doctrinal), Vision statement, Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love; Anabaptist history of speaking truth to power; ecumenical linkages; creative and diverse worship and music; pastoral salary guidelines.

7. —the opportunities?

Dorothy: Endless. Cooperating with each other and other faith communities in matters of peace, justice, mental health, human rights, globalization, economic resourcing; establishing teaching centers in congregations with our colleges and seminaries to educate new leaders and pastors, resource lay leaders, encourage youth and inspire artists; sharing scholarship concerning Anabaptism and biblical literacy in local, regional, national and global arenas; creating funding sources for new ventures in land stewardship, church planting and congregational visioning.

John: I hope we will discover the places where the Anabaptist vision is alive and well beyond our denominational boundaries and offer our support. I hope we can embrace conversations that make us uncomfortable, allowing questions and doubts within the context of loving communities. I hope we will engage the missional calling, seeking to discover and reveal the image of God within everyone around us.

8. —the threats?

John: The greatest threats come from within, when we equate institutional preservation with the advancement of the reign of God, when we confuse unity with uniformity, when the word "Mennonite" describes an exclusive ethnicity rather than a living faith, when we engage in missional encounters without being open to being changed by those encounters.

Dorothy: Seduction by consumerism, violence and prejudice in our culture; societal fear; forgetting our Anabaptist history; lack of energy or inertia for involvement with congregational discernment and the inadequate spiritual practices of church members; post-Christendom realities; growth of poverty in our communities.

To obey or not to obey

A meditation on Romans 12:14-13:10

by Martha Yoder Maust

Romans 13 starts with this phrase: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities." What does that mean? Are we always supposed to obey everything the government tells us to do? ▶

Is Paul just exaggerating to make a point? Before we look at the text, let's consider some examples of how Christians have chosen to obey or not to obey the government authorities.

I begin with a story from my family history. My mother was a teenager in eastern France when World War II began. She lived on a farm and attended the Diesen Mennonite congregation. When Germany occupied eastern France, members noticed a man they did not know in the back of the church building during worship services, observing what was being said and done. Congregation members assumed he was a plainclothes member of the Gestapo. Several years ago, I asked my mother what she remembered of what had been preached at Diesen during the war. "Submit yourselves to the governing authorities," she said. What would you expect? What else could a preacher say when he preached under the eyes of the Gestapo?

No matter who you are, you know that living in harmony can be a lot of work.

A second example comes from Indiana history. Levi Coffin was a Quaker merchant who kept a general store near Richmond, Ind., in the 1830s and 1840s. Against the advice of some of his friends, he became involved in the Underground Railroad movement. He and his wife sheltered escaping slaves in their home and transported them to the next stop on their road to safety and freedom in Canada. His work was illegal. Neighbors boycotted his store, and some leaders in his church disapproved of his activities. He is credited with helping more than 3,000 slaves escape.

Another example comes from the southern United States. Twenty years after the Civil War, states in the south enacted laws mandating strict separation of black and white people. People with any degree of African ancestry could not use facilities reserved for whites. In the 1950s and 1960s, some courageous African-Americans challenged these laws. Accompanied by white friends, they sat together at lunch counters, rode buses together (see Mediaculture, page 59) and demonstrated together. Some were killed; many were jailed or beaten or both. The movement eventually led to the dismantling of the racist laws that had persisted for many decades.

Having considered those examples, let's shift gears and move to the book of Romans, which began as a lengthy letter written to the house churches in Rome. The letter was probably read aloud and discussed in one congregation after another, as the listeners tried to understand what Paul was saying and how it applied to them. As in many large cities, there would have been people from many nations living in Rome, including Jews and Greeks. Some of the

James H. Meredith (left) was the first African-American to enroll at the University of Mississippi. He was escorted to class by U.S. marshals on Jan. 1, 1962.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Christians may have been merchants, some owned property and some were poor. Maybe they were suffering persecution. They brought all these perspectives to their hearing of Paul's letter.

Instead of starting at the beginning of Romans 13, let's back up to the last few verses of chapter 12 so we can get a sense of the flow of Paul's thought. Imagine yourself as a Roman Christian hearing these words read to you: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (All quotations from Romans are from the New International Version.)

You might be thinking about a recent event of persecution that happened to you or to someone in your congregation.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

If you are a well-to-do Roman, you might be wondering whether Paul realizes how hard it is to reach across class barriers or how hard it is for you to wash the feet of a poor brother or sister in imitation of Jesus. If you are a Jewish Christian, you might be thinking about how hard it is to share a meal with those who don't observe the food laws that you have observed since childhood. No matter who you are, you know that living in harmony can be a lot of work.

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. … Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now you might be thinking about the last time someone sinned against you and wishing Paul would be more understanding about how hard it is to get along with some folks, especially those in power. Perhaps you would find yourself thinking about rebellion. But the Roman Empire was ruthless with insurgents. Jesus was crucified under a banner calling him the King of the Jews, and many others who looked like rebels to Rome were also crucified. So Paul did not want his readers, wishing they could return evil for evil, to plot rebellion. Imagine yourself, again, as a Roman Christian hearing these words of Paul:

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. … It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. That is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing."

Maybe we can figure out when to obey and when not to obey the government by looking at the needs of our neighbors.

That sort of takes the wind out of your rebellious sails. Jesus submitted to crucifixion, and you, too, are to submit when persecution and punishment come your way. And it does seem that God has allowed the Romans to be in charge of the known world, at least for now. Maybe Paul teaches against insurrection in order to avoid greater persecution and bloodshed.

But does Paul really mean it when he says that rulers hold no terror for those who do right? Certainly we who read this letter in 2010 know of cases where governments, from Nazi Germany to Central American dictatorships to the killing fields of Cambodia, have been sources of terror to those who did right. But Paul did not live in any of those times or places. Remember that Paul was a Roman citizen, with all the privileges of that position. In Acts 23, we read about how Paul was protected from a lynch mob by Roman soldiers. He appealed to the protection of Rome when it seemed that he could not get a fair trial in Caesarea. So it seems that, for him at least, the Roman government held no terror.

Let's go back once more to imagining ourselves as Roman Christians hearing this letter:

"Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another. For he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet' and whatever other commandment there may be are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Here is where it all comes together for the listener. We have to pay the taxes we owe to the government officials who come to collect them. We owe respect to those in authority. Above all, we owe honor to God, and we owe love to each other and to all of our fellow human beings. Submitting to the government authorities is not the greatest law. It’s one of those “other commandments” Paul mentions. Love of God and of neighbors is the greatest law, and submission to the government is only one thing that we are asked to do to avoid unnecessary bloodshed and harm to our neighbors.

Let us read Paul’s writings and other Scripture texts together, and let us talk with each other about the greater laws and the lesser laws.

If love of our neighbors is a greater commandment than submitting to the authorities, then maybe we can figure out when to obey and when not to obey the government by looking at the needs of our neighbors. Let’s go back to our examples and see how the greater law applies to the question of obedience to the authorities. When a plainclothes Gestapo man stood at the back of the Diesen congregation, love of neighbors led the preacher to preach about submission to the authorities, since he knew that preaching about rulers being toppled from their thrones would probably result in harm to his congregation.

Levi Coffin and other Christians broke the law when they sheltered people who were fleeing from slavery through the Underground Railroad. When asked to defend his actions in court, Levi said: “I had read in the Bible when I was a boy that it was right to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and to minister to those who had fallen among thieves and were wounded but that no distinction in regard to color was mentioned in the good Book, so in accordance with its teachings I had received these fugitives and cared for them” (*Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*, Ayer, 1992).

Coffin acted in love toward his neighbors, and this led him to disobey some of the laws that supported slavery.

During the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s, some Christians—especially white Christians who already enjoyed their civil rights—disapproved of the demonstrations, saying that legal methods should be used instead. Other Christians argued that the greater law of love for the neighbor justified breaking the Jim Crow laws that denied basic civil rights to people of African descent.

We have looked at the text from Romans and at a few examples from more recent Christian experience. What does Paul’s teaching mean for us today? Sometimes we can call upon our government to right some wrongs, and the government can be a source of protection from angry mobs, as it was in the case of Paul. (Think of Ruby Bridges and the federal marshals who protected her as she walked to school every day.) Laws mandating free public education and providing health care for low-income pregnant women are good laws, and we support them. Most of us obey most of the laws of our land most of the time.

But there are times when we are called to obey the greater law of loving our neighbor and to disobey some of the lesser laws that keep us from doing that. Some of us have felt called to withhold a part of our taxes in order not to participate in killing those whom our government considers enemies. Some churches have provided sanctuary to people fleeing persecution in their own lands but unable to convince our government of their need for protection as refugees. Food and relief supplies have sometimes been provided to people our government did not consider worthy of our aid.

So let us read Paul’s writings and other Scripture texts together, and let us talk with each other about the greater laws and the lesser laws. Together let us seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus, loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. When the law of our land conflicts with the greater laws, let us work together to discern the right path, and let us support each other if our attempts to be faithful lead to suffering. When in doubt about the right path, let’s reread these words from Paul: “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another. For he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law.”

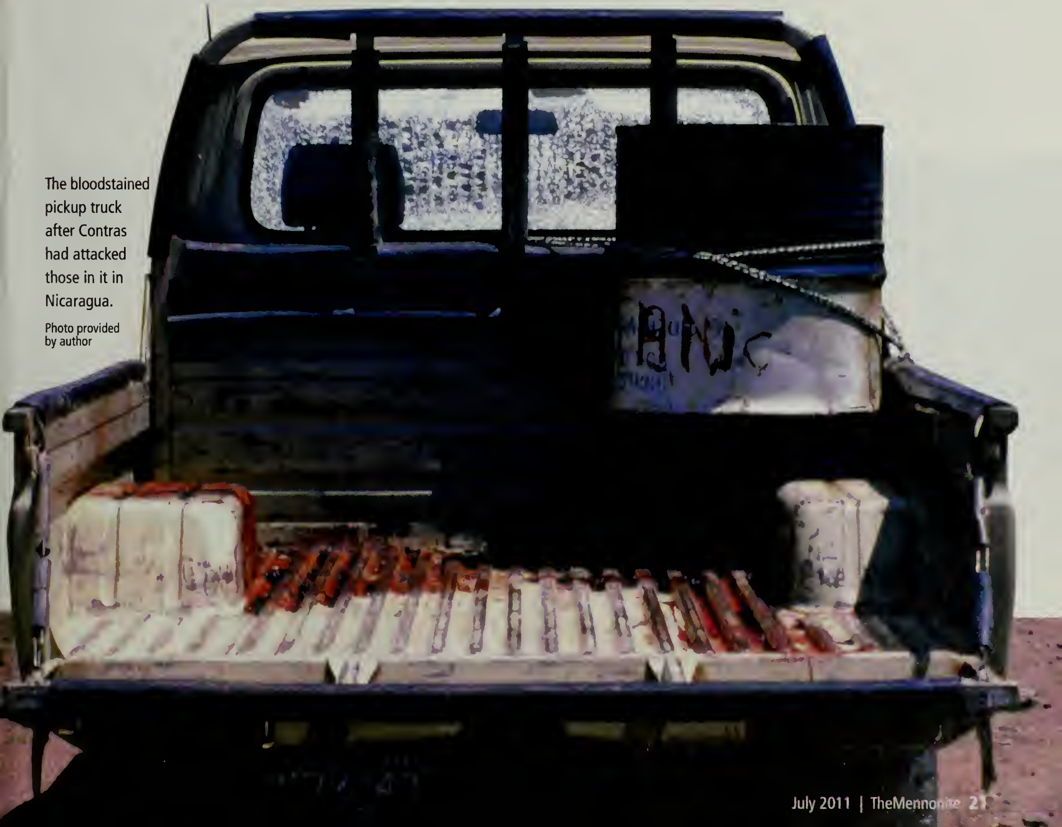
Martha Yoder Maust is a family physician and a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis.

A witness to war

Experiences from someone who saw a war from two ends

I teach chemistry (not everyone's favorite subject), so I'm used to people not wanting me to give a presentation. When someone called in a bomb threat, however, after reading that I would speak at Markham (Ill.) Mennonite Church on a Sunday morning in 1988, it involved a topic more important to me than chemistry. The congregation decided to go ahead with the service, although some families kept their children home, and I spoke about my experiences in Nicaragua documenting human rights violations by the U.S.-backed Contra guerrillas. ▶

by Doug Schirch



The bloodstained pickup truck after Contras had attacked those in it in Nicaragua.

Photo provided by author

Talking about the war in Nicaragua is like describing the culture shock students experience returning to their First World bedrooms after living with a host family in the two-thirds world in an adobe hut under a tin roof. The explanations don't do justice to the disparity experienced.

One of those experiences was coming across a tan civilian pickup truck that had been ambushed an hour earlier. We had been on this road the previous week. The intense sun on the sprawling, flat cornfields at some places had reminded me of peaceful summer days growing up in Ohio on Augsburger Road, where Doug and Jim Caskey and I often played as kids.

There sat an empty vehicle, its tires flattened, the windows shattered by bullets; blood was in the cabin and two pools in the pickup bed. The victims in the back must have bled profusely, as the blood had flowed out and onto the ground before the sun's heat had started drying it into a sticky glue. We didn't know if the ambulance had removed the victims alive or dead, but we knew that blood in the back came from two children.

We didn't know if the ambulance had removed the victims alive or dead, but we knew that blood in the back came from two children.

Earlier in the day an army roadblock had prevented us from driving through here. A group of Contra guerrillas had been seen ahead, and they frequently ambushed civilian vehicles on this road. The two other Witness for Peace (WFP) co-workers and I were eager for them to lift the roadblock so we could continue searching for Richard, a coworker who had been kidnapped by the Contras the week before.

Eventually, giving up, we turned around and drove away. That's when we saw this tan pickup, with two boys in the back, pass us going the opposite direction. They took our place at the roadblock. When it was lifted an hour later, they were the first to pass.

The next day we attended a wake for the victim in the cab, a 28-year-old man. We listened to his friends and his wife, who nursed a 6-month-old baby, grieve. "Why would anyone want to do this? How can they shoot innocent civilians and children? What do those people hope to achieve by doing these things?"

A boy who survived the attack by Contras in Nicaragua. Photo provided by author

A 15-year-old boy in the back survived a bullet through the neck that nearly hit his spine. He had been travelling to a weekly Bible study with his 8-year-old brother, who lost his arm and was brain-damaged. He wouldn't talk. The older brother didn't know if it was because of the emotional trauma or the brain injury. Kids where I grew up on Augsburger Road don't have to worry about the U.S. government doing this.

Would those have been our consequences had we waited with patience at the roadblock and been the first vehicle through? I'd like to think that the markings on our pickup identifying us as journalists meant we would have been spared. Nevertheless, having been spared, what responsibility did that place on me?

Certainly to tell the stories of what I had seen and heard from Contra victims: the cooperative farm burned to the ground and three fathers killed, the Chilean agronomist captured and decapitated, the 6-month-old baby we buried after the Contras attacked her house, the poor farmer kidnapped from his home in the middle of the night and found dead the next morning.

Although I came from the country that trained, bankrolled and directed the Contra guerrillas, Nicaraguan victims always made me feel loved. "We know people in the U.S. can't control what their government does," they often told me. As the other WFP volunteers and I knew, however, that was patently untrue. But surely, if we told people in the United States what we witnessed, wouldn't they stop the government? After all, we don't treat each other in the United States like this. That's why I dedicated five years to talking and listening to those on two ends of this war—the receiving and the sending.

However, sharing what I'd witnessed did not change the minds of many Contra supporters I spoke to in the United States. Even if the conversation started in a church, the justifications ended up under the flag, based on patriotism, differentiating "us" from "them." Stories about Contras killing children clashed with national pride; the more pride, the less they wanted to hear. Because religious ritual is used to teach patriotism, I shouldn't have been surprised.

I also spoke to many supportive audiences who did write their congresspeople. But that's because most audiences were Mennonite groups that invited me.

That support wasn't the case for a WFP volunteer who returned to speak at his home Mennonite congregation. They got angry, not with their government but with their member who had gone to Nicaragua. That Mennonite church had a U.S. flag in it. When I picture the blood in the pickup, I don't see it coming from our bullets or politics; it came from our patriotism and comfort with dual allegiances.

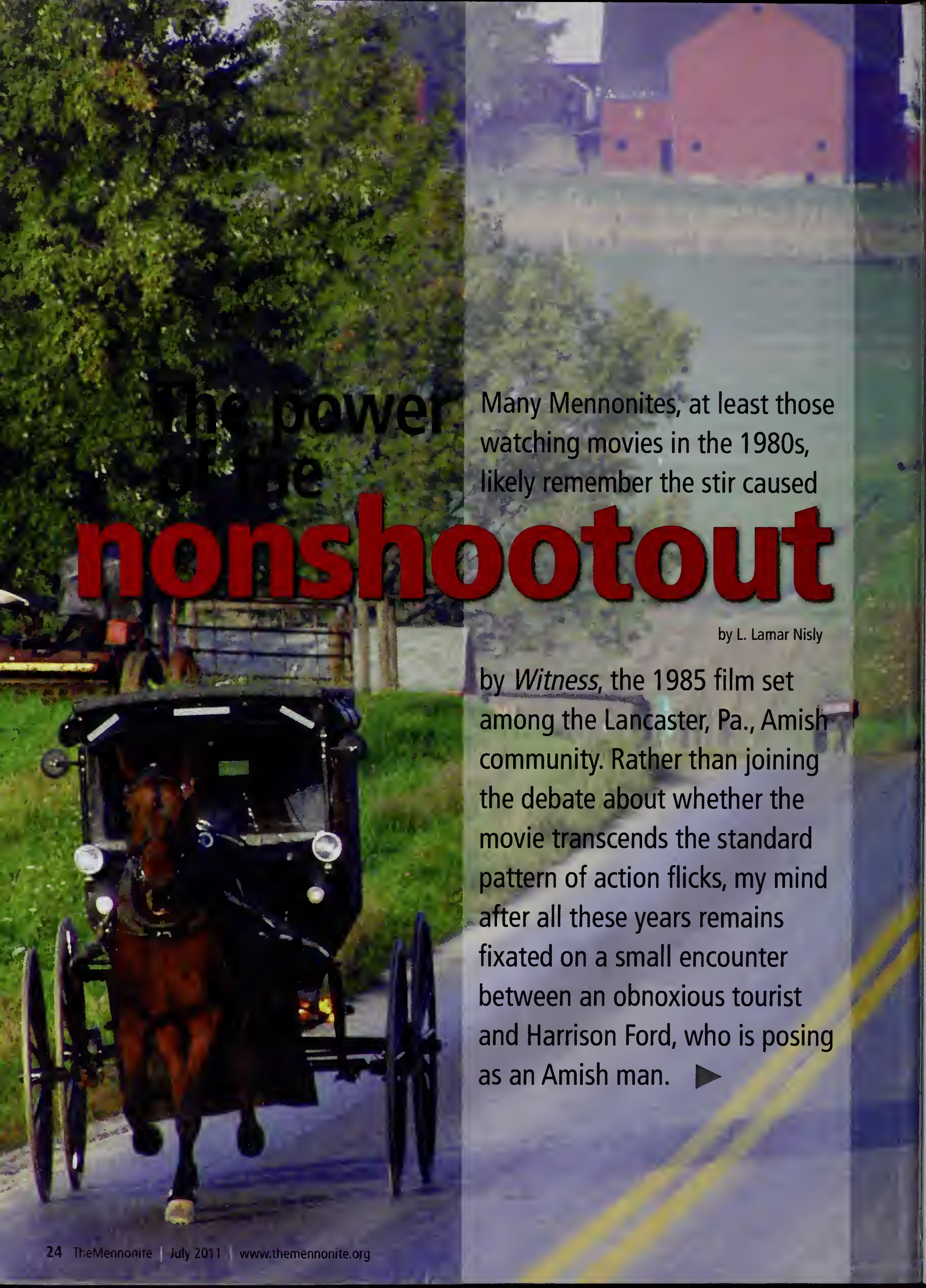
When ardent Contra supporters said the deaths of innocent Nicaraguans were necessary collateral to protect the United States, I considered asking if that rationale extended to the death of the person standing in front of them. I didn't ask; I knew the answer, from the bomb threat at Markham and U.S. government warnings against working in Nicaragua. If you behave as if your country isn't elevated above others, people see you as one of "them."

The war taught me that peace begins with the way Jesus' treated Samaritans, tax collectors and soldiers.

The patriotic argument always begins with love (for country) but inevitably demands our acquiescence for doing things to outsiders that is criminal behavior in our own country. The war taught me that peace begins with the way Jesus treated Samaritans, tax collectors and soldiers. He went out of his way to teach us that no borders stood between him and them. It didn't matter that such actions violated intense social expectations or angered some.

As a kid I often attended sporting events at a Mennonite college with the tradition of standing and singing the National Anthem. I wondered if it was inconsistent, but then why would the college do it? When I discovered as a student at Goshen (Ind.) College that it didn't play the anthem, that practice spoke louder to me than any classroom lecture on the topic. That practice was later validated in the war by what I saw patriotism do to people on both ends, the believing and the receiving. That is why I felt terrible sadness when the college that set me on the path to Nicaragua was teaching students to stand in solemn religious obedience for a ceremony cultivating patriotic allegiances.

Doug Schirch is professor of chemistry at Goshen (Ind.) College.



The power of the nonshootout

by L. Lamar Nisly

Many Mennonites, at least those watching movies in the 1980s, likely remember the stir caused by *Witness*, the 1985 film set among the Lancaster, Pa., Amish community. Rather than joining the debate about whether the movie transcends the standard pattern of action flicks, my mind after all these years remains fixated on a small encounter between an obnoxious tourist and Harrison Ford, who is posing as an Amish man. ▶

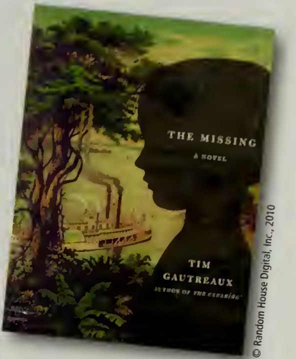
Resisting the myth of redemptive violence in Tim Gautreaux's *The Missing*

Assuming that no Amish person will retaliate, the young tough dabs an ice cream cone on the face of Ford's friend. Notwithstanding my lifelong pacifist commitments, I find it difficult not to feel gleeful when our hero slugs the surprised tourist.

The sequence demonstrated in this small scene occurs repeatedly in comic books, cartoons, and movies: Our hero is tracking down the villains; he takes some hits along the way; but, in the climactic scene, he destroys the evil one with compelling and exciting violence that eliminates the villainy and sets everything aright. Theologian Walter Wink, in *Engaging the Powers* (1992), identifies this cultural pattern as the myth of redemptive violence, a shared assumption that when a wrong occurs, violence is required to eliminate evil. Wink writes: "Violence is so successful as a myth precisely because it does not seem to be mythic in the least. Violence simply appears to be the nature of things. It is what works. It is inevitable, the last and often first resort in conflicts."

The usual inevitability of violence, and often vengeance, in books and movies is what makes Tim Gautreaux's novel *The Missing* (Knopf, 2009) such a welcome, alternative voice. Gautreaux, a Catholic writer from Louisiana, has published two other novels and two collections of short stories that often wrestle with moral issues. *The Missing* places questions about revenge at the center of a compelling storyline.

Sam Simoneaux, the protagonist of the novel, arrives in France just after the armistice has been signed, ending World War I. Though he witnessed the devastation the war had caused, Sam was not involved in any of the fighting. Gautreaux, who had uncles involved in the major engagements of World War I, notes in an interview that Sam's life has been shaped by avoiding the fighting, for "it just happens that everybody that gets involved in the business of shooting people with rifles ends up damaged and changed." Sam returns to New Orleans, eager to settle into civilian life with his wife as he works as a floorwalker, or security guard, at a department store. Yet two violent events, one long ago and the other recent, conspire to upset Sam's anticipated serene existence. First, we learn that Sam's entire parental family, except for him, was murdered in a revenge killing, so he was raised by his uncle's family. Second, Sam fails to thwart a kidnapping of Lily, a beautiful blond girl, from the department store, so he is fired from his job. Both because he hopes to have his job restored and because of his sense of guilt, Sam embarks on a journey to find the missing child.



© Random House Digital, Inc., 2010

Much of the novel takes place on a jazz excursion boat, as Sam travels with Lily's parents up and down the Mississippi River, hoping to find clues about the kidnapping. At the same time, Sam struggles to come to terms with his own childhood loss. Much of the novel is filled with Sam's detective work as he tries to piece together clues about both crimes. Eventually he is able to glean names of possible villains. In response to both situations, the kidnapping and the family massacre, Sam hears a constant drumbeat of criticism from his companions because he hesitates to carry out decisive vengeance against the perpetrators. One of the most persistent is Charlie Duggs, Sam's bunkmate on the boat, who says: "Well, you're a little pudding if I ever saw one. You don't try to find out about these outlaws, I hate to say this, but I'll be ashamed of you."

The myth of redemptive violence is a shared assumption that when a wrong occurs, violence is required to eliminate evil.

The quiet voice that helps Sam resist this alluring response comes from his Uncle Claude, the unsophisticated yet devout man who raised him. When Sam informs his uncle that he has discovered his family's killers, his uncle astonishes him by saying, "It's been 26 years they been suffering. ... It's what the priest says, Sam. Sin is its own punishment. They got to live with what they did. ... Baby, what they did is who they are. It makes them cripples. Half-people."

Claude's assertions are probably as astounding to the reader's ears as to Sam's, for he is espousing the countercultural view that one who has been wronged has no need to seek revenge; the perpetrator himself is already suffering because of the sinful action. In a line that reflects Sam's loss as well as a caution over any vengeful action, Claude says, "Ah, Sammy, when a man kills somebody, the most important thing he takes away is all the things that person can do in a lifetime." Claude's thoughtful comments force Sam and the reader to embrace the whole range of implications of a killing, not just the short-term jolt of righteousness redemptive violence provides.

'Bullets didn't seek out guilt or innocence; they were flying accidents of fate.'—from *The Missing*

Two scenes particularly highlight Gautreaux's challenge to our standard cultural myths. After Sam learns the identity of Lily's kidnappers, her teenage brother August decides he must kill them, both to punish her theft as well as to avenge his father, who has been killed in an earlier attack on the kidnappers. Anticipating the harm the outlaws will inflict on August, Sam hurries after the boy, catching up to him in the woods outside their house. Gautreaux provides a forceful, engaging conversation between the two, as Sam enunciates the reasons against seeking revenge. Though August remains committed to revenge, Sam gets August to pause just long enough that he does not shoot when the kidnapper walks out the door—holding Lily. August is stunned, realizing that he almost shot his sister, and he emotionally thanks Sam for stopping him. Reflecting on this scene, Sam muses one of the most memorable lines of the novel: "Bullets didn't seek out guilt or innocence; they were flying accidents of fate."

Though these kidnappers are scoundrels, the encounter with them serves as a mere dress rehearsal for Sam's meeting with the debased killers of his family, the Cloats clan. As he journeys to accost these murderers, Sam hears horrific tales of what the Cloats do to anyone who crosses them. Despite his hesitation about seeking vengeance, Sam takes a gun with him and is unsure what he will do when he confronts the killers. What he finds when he arrives at the Cloats compound seems appropriate for such a debased family: only three of the Cloats men remain alive, each of them old and diseased. With Sam clearly in control of the situation, the reader is poised for a glorious scene of redemptive violence, a response that Sam contemplates: "Sam raised the pistol thinking of how he could kill him and people would care more for the corpse of a mole rotting in its burrow. His eyes narrowed for a moment, along with his conscience. Living in the present is so easy. You just do a thing and not think about what could happen the next day, or how you might view your own actions in 10 years." In this reflection, Sam gives the lie to much of what makes the myth of redemptive violence seem so attractive. Violent action appears to have no consequences except to remove the evil character. But as Sam, encouraged by his uncle, realizes, actions always have consequences.

Instead of shooting him, Sam forces old Cloats to recount details about Sam's family, helping Sam visualize his missing relatives. These images of his family allow Sam to find some peace and begin the process of healing from this loss. Gautreaux notes that some readers were disappointed with this unusual climax, for "Americans have been programmed to a template of offense followed by justified violence. This is a cliché and a simple-minded notion. I hope *The Missing* sets some writers free from the idea that if offense is given then offense must be taken."

Providing a different conclusion than *Witness*, this nonshootout—indeed all of *The Missing*—can inspire not only writers but all readers of the novel to resist the siren song of redemptive violence. May we all affirm with Sam's uncle that sin is its own punishment, thus putting aside vengeance and engaging in the much harder but much more rewarding work of healing.

L. Lamar Nisly is professor of English at Bluffton (Ohio) University.

Love the church

The call of the church to be missional

by Jeremy Shue and Sherah-Leigh Gerber

In his 2007 sociological study of Mennonite Church USA (*Road Signs for the Journey*, Herald Press, 2007), Conrad Kanagy points out that young adults "are less engaged in the church than are older members." While that grim statement may characterize many, some young adults are working at renewal and mission within the congregations of MC USA. The Anabaptist Missional Project (AMP) consists of a variety of young adults from across the United States who are engaged in conversations that grow out of a love for Jesus, a deep love for church and a desire to participate in the mission of God.

Understanding the missional church

Over the last decade Mennonite Church USA has used the word "missional" to describe who we are and what we are to be about. Caring for the church is an important part of the vision and goals of AMP, and this passion is interwoven with the call to be missional.

Church as community

Missional may be an obtuse word, but the Trinity provides us with two ways of illustrating what it means to be missional. Understanding God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all as one and the same God provides an understanding of community. The church participates in communion with one another in that same relational style.

The apostle Paul used the language of the body of Christ. Just as the Trinity can be viewed as three distinct persons and the body has many different parts, the church is also made up of many different people. As a part of the body of Christ, we all bring our personal experiences and understandings of God to the community.

When we disagree is precisely when we need each other the most.

Since we live in a broken world, we are a broken communion. None of us sees wholly, yet we all see partially. This is why we so desperately need each other. We cannot completely understand who God is by ourselves. Part of being the body is committing to give and receive counsel, to work at displaying God's love and reconciliation to the world. Just as the hand cannot live separated from the body, we cannot live when separated from other Christians. When we disagree with one another, living together may seem impossible, but when we disagree is precisely when we need each other the most.

Living out our commitment to this community by the grace and reconciliation available in Christ Jesus stands out from the surrounding culture. It is what makes us a city on a hill. This commitment to the community is our care for the church, but it is not limited to an insular community of believers.

Church as sent community

The broken body of believers that I love—the church—is a community sent by God into the world. In John 20, Jesus appears to the disciples following his resurrection and tells them: " 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them 'Receive the Holy Spirit' " (John 20:21-22).

As the body of Christ, the church is sent to represent God to the world in the same way Jesus dwelt on earth: We are to be the church in every aspect of our lives, representing God no matter where we are. We cannot sit back and wonder why people are not beating down the doors of our congregation. Instead we must realize that the Spirit of God is at work outside our congregations, even among people who do not proclaim Jesus as their Lord. There is not a place we can go where the Spirit is not already present and at work. The missional church embraces its mission as a sent community, joining the Spirit in its work where ever it may be.

Putting it into practice

There are many churches, pastors, leaders and believers that care for the church and are working to put this missional call into practice. One example is Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church, where team pastors Lydell Steiner and Thomas Dunn (both young adults) brought the congregation along in their shared vision of reaching the community in a new way.

Two and a half years ago, these young pastors received a request to assist someone with their heating bill. Rather than just agreeing to pay the bill, they wanted to see why the bill was so high in the first place. Upon arriving at the man's home in the local trailer park, Thomas and Lydell were introduced to an unknown pocket of poverty just down the road from their congregation. As they continued to follow-up with the heating bill situation, they wondered how the church could be present in this neighborhood.

At first they took church youth to play games and throw a Frisbee with the children at the trailer park. Those relationships led to more organized programs, such as a fall fest and movie night. Soon the congregation had the idea to start a summer program in the trailer park. They hired a young adult intern for eight weeks to develop programming that involved Christian teaching and basic physical health programming.

The church has continued developing relationships with the trailer park residents. "Mentor families" have agreed to bring children to the Wednesday evening meals and to Sunday morning services and Sunday school. A couple from the congregation is preparing to move into the park as part of getting to know the local community.

This missional outreach has raised many questions in the congregation. Is the goal simply to get these people to start coming to church? How can the congregation address issues of economic development? What can the church learn from these people with different life experiences? How can mutual relationships be built and sustained?

The challenges

When the church embraces its identity as a sent community, it cannot remain unchanged. Is it possible that young adults have been listening to the denomination as it challenges us to be missional? Might embracing our missional identity shift our focus from the politics of the denomination to experimenting with engaging the poor community just around the corner? As we learn to live our entire lives as missional workers in the kingdom of God, we will no doubt experience God at work throughout the week and not just on a Sunday morning.

> Might embracing our missional identity shift our focus from the politics of the denomination to experimenting with engaging the poor community just around the corner?

When we see our entire lives as participating in the kingdom, Sunday morning with fellow believers may not maintain the same priority level it once did. Even if we are not gathered on a Sunday morning, we must remember the importance of worship for the life of the church.

Worship must be a continuous part of the missional church. It may happen in a warehouse, around a dining-room table, in an office before work or in a sanctuary on a Sunday morning. No matter where it happens, when we worship the God who created the earth and everything in it, when we worship Jesus, whose life, death and resurrection model the way to live and offer us grace, we are demonstrating to the world that the story we are participating in is larger than us. We are proclaiming that God is worthy of our praise and worthy of our lives.

How do we learn to take our worship into the world as a sent community? Answering this question will no doubt change the way we think about church. Are we willing to see where the mission of God might take us?

Jeremy Shue is minister of outreach at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Sherah-Leigh Gerber is resource team coordinator for Ohio Conference and a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

www.sxc.com

Life in a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit

My work opened the door for me into a new world—a world of police brutality, cold nights, complicated bureaucracies and weary faces.

by Ben Kreider

Blessings

Ben Kreider works in the chicken coop at East Central Ministries, an organization in Albuquerque, N.M., where he volunteers. Photo by Andrew Clouse

I came to the Land of Enchantment at roughly three miles over the speed limit. My uncle drove me, my trusty bicycle, an assortment of footwear, clothing, knickknacks and a guitar across the horizontal world of sky and land of Kansas into a land interrupted by rock formations. I now reside at my farthest ever latitude position west relative to the United States.

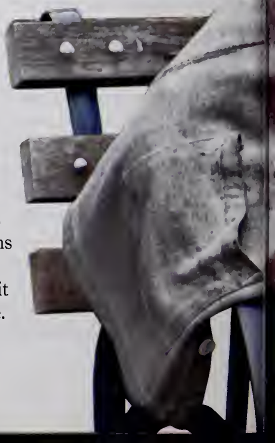
In at least a superficial way I follow those before me who have gone to a western land, for better or worse. Although I felt at home immediately, welcomed by our unit leaders, Gabe and Bethany, with good food and a waiting bed, I knew that, like Dorothy, I wasn't in Kansas anymore. Stucco and cactus abounded, green chiles awaited my impending addiction, and the solemn Sandia Mountains looked on.

Vacation-like wonderment in all aspects of my life soon transitioned to a clear picture of the realities awaiting this new adventure. The early honeymoon of unit life was replaced by a more realistic and wholesome lifestyle that included doing dishes, sleeping, responsibilities to others, and adapting to the eccentricities of my housemates.

Working at St. Martin's Hospitality Center, an organization that provides services for Albuquerque's many homeless people, opened the door for me into a new world—a world of police brutality, cold nights, complicated bureaucracies and weary faces. I have had a small glimpse into the world of the homeless in Albuquerque. My official job title is shelter assistant. From 7:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. I do a variety of tasks, not limited to helping people find the help they need, running the clothing room, handing out food, cleaning the shelter and using my six-foot-four-inch height to reach high objects. I answer the phone at the front desk many times a day. Often the person on the other end of the line lays out a desperate story, and usually the only help I can offer is to listen. The majority of serious requests I can't personally help with, either because I'm an ignorant 18-year-old who isn't acutely in tune with the complexities of how to access services in Albuquerque or because there simply isn't any help available. I also help run the mail room. Another employee and I sort hundreds of pieces of mail a day. Checks, IDs, letters, bills and packages all pass through our hands. I now have a fondness and respect for names and can alphabetize in my sleep.

One day, as I was unlocking my bike to go home, a man I'll call Martin spoke to me. The conversation steered to the book he was reading, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He shared how much he had learned from this book and how his journey to live as a Christian—to let his light shine as a homeless man—was both difficult and rewarding. I was inspired.

I saw a mother and her baby come into St. Martin's, and I choked up. It's not that seeing moms and kids is an unexpected occurrence; it happens all the time.



But I was struck by the realization—and could see—that this baby was indeed God's beloved child, as was the baby's mom. When I am able to see God's touch in others, the true identity of others and in myself, I am astounded, floored, bewildered, moved. I am in awe to comprehend that God in his/her entirety took the form of a refugee baby who grew up to be a homeless man. The All Powerful became what our society would call the epitome of weakness and failure. That gives me hope.

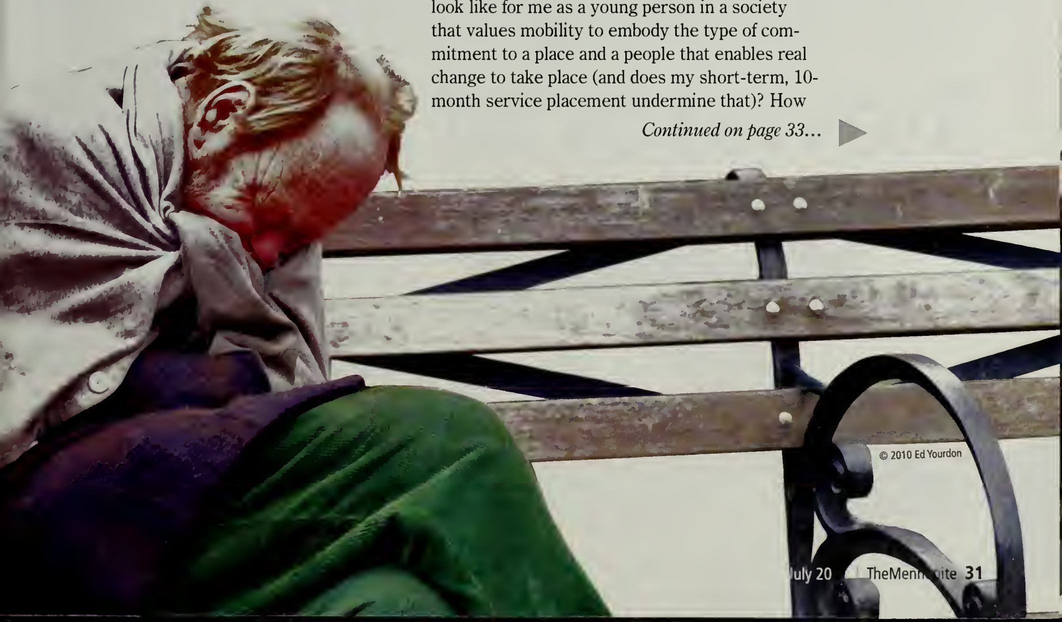
It is limiting to believe that my vocation, and more importantly God's work, is confined to the organization I clock in and out of every day. My house is also a place of work in a different sense. Here I must clean and cook but also prod and affirm my brothers and sisters in their own journeys and request they do the same for me. As I am young and seeking wisdom, my vocation is also to be a humble learner. I volunteer at a Christian community development organization called East Central Ministries many afternoons. While I help with their urban farm, I have learned fascinating things about chickens, the nature of New Mexico-style roofing, how difficult it is to be ethical and turn a profit, urban gardening and a work ethic.

God's work also happens when we expand our communities. I was messing around with a soccer ball one Sunday afternoon after playing a pickup game with some folks in a park. Some Hispanic guys had shown up and were kicking the ball around. I went over and introduced myself, hoping to gain some information on the local soccer scene. One of the guys, Jorge, invited me to scrimmage with a team. What followed turned into a friendship with Jorge, invitations to his church and home, and me being able to play on a few different teams, all in Hispanic leagues. I am a tall white guy that barely speaks Spanish and usually plays center defense. The serendipity of these opportunities, and Jorge's hospitality to me—a stranger—point to God.

How do I serve the broken out of my own brokenness?

My living thus far has not given me a nice, clean-cut philosophy, a lovely little theology but rather inconsistencies that I struggle to force together and often leave separated. Sometimes these tensions are best expressed as questions. How do I go on long weekend trips, driving hundreds of miles, marveling at the beauty of God's creation, then come back on Monday to people who are desperate for a one-way bus ticket home or a $2 bus pass to the doctor? How do I live with the economic privilege that allows me to choose to do service, a choice that one of my recently immigrated soccer teammates would probably never have the luxury of making? How do I serve the broken out of my own brokenness? What does it look like for me as a young person in a society that values mobility to embody the type of commitment to a place and a people that enables real change to take place (and does my short-term, 10-month service placement undermine that)? How

Continued on page 33... ▶



© 2010 Ed Yourdon

Stewards of grace

We are called to receive grace from God and give grace to others.

by Marty Troyer

I am a huge fan of novels and movies. Many light-bulb moments have come at the feet of unexpected mentors, such as Tolkien, Rowling, McCarthy, Anderson and O'Connor.

For instance, one meaning-filled image of stewardship I have comes from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. In these books, he introduces a family of stewards of the kingdom of Gondor. Functioning in place of a king, their primary function is to hold the throne for the time when a king would return. With all the responsibility and most of the rights of royalty, they clearly were not kings. They were stewards and caretakers. They stewarded something that belonged to another. They did not possess the throne but held it only to give it away.

1 Peter 4:10-11 says we are stewards of God's grace. We are given God's grace not for our own sake, not to possess it or because it belongs to us. No, we steward God's grace by holding it in order to give it away. Peter's letter drips with talk of grace, which for him was the only real, tangible way we encounter God. It is the very Spirit and character of God. I'm reminded of the father's radical welcome of the prodigal sons, Jesus' countercultural defense of women and those on the fringe, the prophetic insistence on inclusion of the lost, the least, the last. Though nurturing, God's grace is no sentimental trait. It is strong, capable of rewriting DNA, relationships and social groups. Indeed, it is the only power with the capacity to bring change to the human heart. George Brunk III says, "Grace is the place God meets us and converts us to godliness and holiness." So when Peter says in 1:2, "May grace and peace be yours in abundance," I say, Yes, give me some more please. Who wouldn't want in on that?

But clearly for Peter the "abundance of grace" is meant to spill out into the world for others. As stewards of grace, we are to serve one another rather than rest in our personal blessings. Like any body of water, unless water can flow in and out, the water will stagnate and spoil. This text, along with 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4, speaks of spiritual gifts that God gives to God's people for the sake of loving others. But a better translation of the Greek "charisma" is "grace gifts," or perhaps "gracing." It's our individual ability to grace others, to be and give grace to them.

This is a captivating, strong and beautiful definition of both ministry and evangelism, the lines between which are suddenly blurred beyond repair. We're called to be and to give grace to others. The shape our "gracing" others takes depends on our individual grace-gifts (speaking, serving), but we're all called to grace others. Imagine how different Christianity would be viewed if we were known as "gracers" instead of evangelizers and judgers? Imagine how different your workplace, neighborhood, family and church would be if you lived to grace others? Imagine the feeling of volunteering not out of oughts and shoulds but out of the overflow of your own internal sense of grace and peace.

I've seen no better example of ministry or evangelism as "gracing others" than from Doris and Berdella Stutzman, two elderly sisters in Oregon, who graced 30-plus teenagers in our youth group and community with their constant care, attention and loyalty. They certainly didn't fit the typical "cool mold" of youth sponsors, but they are to this day the most effective sponsors I've ever worked with. I've witnessed countless teenagers gracing others (was it ministry or evangelism or both?) by eating lunch in the cafeteria with outcasts and lonely classmates.

Once I witnessed an episode of gracing in Panera Bread, where one obviously distraught patron was gently cared for by an employee who took the opportunity to pray for her. Each of these acts of grace defines a church I am excited to be a part of and energizes me for the old categories we traditionally called "ministry" and "evangelism."

It should surprise no one that these words come from Peter, whose journey was one of constant transformation by the grace of Christ in his life. From headstrong fishermen to lifelong responder to Jesus' call, "Follow me." From calling down fire on the heads of outsiders to radical inclusion of Cornelius and all Gentiles. From demanding Jesus' security to celebrating being "tested by fire." From three painful denials to embracing Jesus' call to "feed my sheep."

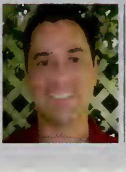
Grace in Peter's life unsettled nations and, like Jesus, ultimately cost him his life.

Apparently, grace is both contagious and confusing. It is contagious because at its core, humanity longs for nothing more or less than wholeness, to find itself in the family of things. Peter found himself through the constant grace of Christ in his life. Under his leadership, the early church attracted hundreds who longed for what Peter seemed to possess: wholeness, grace, God.

It is confusing because God's steadfast love and unmerited favor poke holes in the one life lesson no one has ever had to teach a single human being, that we have fallen short. Kings and religious leaders alike opposed Peter's proclamation of grace, demanding obedience and conformity. Grace proves that instinct dead wrong by creating wholeness in previously scattered and pathological hearts. Peter no longer slinks into the shadows of conformity, but publicly sings of his transformed faith being "imperishable, undefiled and unfading."

Imagine the feeling of volunteering not out of oughts and shoulds but out of the overflow of your own internal sense of grace and peace.

So if grace is where God meets us and shapes us to give as Jesus gave, may it be yours in abundance. And may you both be and give grace to others. Anything less wouldn't be worth sharing anyway.



Marty Troyer is pastor of Houston Mennonite Church.

Blessings

... *continued from page 31*

does one serve in a way so both "us" and the "them" come to know that each person's salvation is bound up with the other?

I came to Albuquerque because I wanted to be shaped. Part of me knew, to quote Richard Rohr, that "we do not think ourselves into new ways of living; we live ourselves into new ways of thinking." I came to Albuquerque because I wanted to be thrown by the Potter as a lump of clay. I came here because I wanted to grow as a disciple of Jesus. Just because I showed up didn't mean that my old habits and unhealthy ways simply disappeared. I still can be lazy, apathetic, selfish and easily distracted. I am in a place (not to say I wasn't in one back home) where I work through such things, where I am repeatedly called to an identity and a purpose higher than my own small, selfish ambitions. When I can feel my housemates and church praying for me, I am comforted and empowered. When I look out from a mountain peak and see grandeur and beauty but also know that down below there is an Air Force base filled with nuclear weapons, homeless people napping on concrete and lonely people trapped in their lives, I am blessed with a fuller vision of reality. When I share food and songs with others, I can hear and taste a glimpse of heaven to come.

I am blessed to serve. I am blessed to catch glimpses of God. Service Adventure has blessed me in the ways of the prayer below, which Albuquerque Mennonite Church used to anoint our unit when we began our service assignments.

When I share food and songs with others, I can hear and taste a glimpse of heaven to come.

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships so that you will live deep in your heart. May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people and the earth so that you will work for justice, equity and peace. May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer so you will reach out your hands to comfort them and change their pain into joy. And may God bless you with the foolishness to think that you can make a difference in the world so you will do the things others say cannot be done.

Ben Kreider, a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., participated in Service Adventure, a Mennonite Mission Network service opportunity for young adults.

Determination and perseverance

Juanita Nuñez is a member of the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA and co-pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer in Apopka, Fla.

When I first came from the Dominican Republic to live in the city of Miami, I was newly wed and in my early 20s. Adapting to a new country, culture and language was a major challenge. I eventually learned that determination and perseverance are key elements in achieving the plans God has for our lives. For those who are having challenges while serving the Lord, I offer the story of Nehemiah, which has given me inspiration.

Nehemiah, whose name means "the Lord comforts," was a great intercessor, a valiant, determined individual and a great reformer of his time. The story, in the book of Nehemiah, took place when some Jews were returning to Jerusalem after 70 years in exile and captivity. Many were probably excited at the chance of a new beginning. However, many unforeseen obstacles and circumstances made this return seem impossible. Nehemiah came to learn of the afflictions of the people, the threat of the enemies surrounding them and the destruction of the city's gates and walls.

What was Nehemiah's reaction to this sad news? He mourned, fasted and prayed to God, ruler of heaven and earth (Nehemiah 1:4-11). Even though Nehemiah lived a privileged life in the palace of the king, he never separated himself from the plight and struggles of the people of Israel. Like a lawyer, he presented their case to God. He recognized God as sovereign ruler of the universe and protector of his people, faithful to his covenant with them.

According to the Word of God, Nehemiah did not pray for only one day and expect to see changes right away. The news came around November or December (called Quisleu). He prayed and waited patiently until the perfect time presented itself to speak to the king—about four months later, in March or April (called Nisan). Through Nehemiah's patience and prayer, God prepared his mind and heart to speak to the king with honesty and humility.

In our instant-satisfaction society, many of us want God's hand to move immediately. However, we must manifest the fruit of the Spirit in waiting, since God always knows the perfect time to act and accomplish his will.

Nehemiah was troubled to the extent that the king noticed his sad look, which could have cost Nehemiah his life. But God was with him, and his words convinced the king to give him his request to be sent to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.

Once his request was approved, Nehemiah set out with a plan of action. He did not let the current condition of what he heard or saw stop him from accomplishing what God had purposed for his people. He made plans with the Jews to repopulate the city, and he gave orders to the leaders and others involved for the reconstruction of the city. He later inspected the work during the long hours of the night to ensure that it was done with precision and excellence. His oversight even helped protect the Israelites from the enemies who were trying to sabotage the work. Through their diligent work, the Jews were able to reconstruct the walls of the city in only 52 days, bringing glory to God as word of their accomplishment spread throughout the region.

> Many of us want God's hand to move immediately, but we must manifest the fruit of the Spirit in waiting, since God always knows the perfect time to act and accomplish his will.

How do we apply some of these truths from the life of Nehemiah to today's society? Mennonite Church USA faces many new challenges, but its true goal and mission have not changed. We are to continue to build and establish God's kingdom of truth, justice and peace until it rules every aspect of his creation. Do we have the patience and determination to persevere in sharing the gospel? God is waiting for his children to impact the world and to shine brightly in it. Where are the Nehemiahs of today—reformers loyal to God, his Word and his will? What is your part?

I believe God has given each of us the ability to be a reformer, and it depends on us how much our lives will impact society. TM

Death makes me angry

Death makes me angry. Not scared, so much as thoroughly ripped off. The way it cuts down young people in their prime, like Bob Wenger on a cycle, or Matt Garber just after graduation. And Jim Williams and Marj Heinrichs in car wrecks. Chet Wenger with a rare leukemia, and Davor Peterlin with an unsuspected heart attack; 200,000 in the Balkan wars of two decades ago. More recently, thousands in the overwhelming Japanese tsunami, and now hundreds in horrific tornadoes. After many disasters and tragedies and scourges and plagues throughout the decades of my brief life, I'm still caught off-guard by how abrupt the ending can be.

Every life is brief; we are all terminal. The little, would-be terror in my daughter's classroom is right: "We're all gonna die." (He'll be on a talk show some day.) Every life is precious, and every life is fragile. Each could potentially be the next Einstein or Beethoven or Mother Theresa.

What do we do with all this talent, this potential, this capacity for life? Far too much of it is wasted. We squander our time and energies on things that pad our security. We distract ourselves with diversions that are mostly self-centered. We obsess about stuff that keeps us from acknowledging the precariousness of our existence on this tiny planet and the sheer gift it is.

Visiting many congregations these days, I'm struck with how the Baby Boomers are telling stories of dealing with aging parents. That's the generational story in our churches. Prayer requests, disrupted schedules, need for support and assistance; the bulletin notes document the far-flung dramas of our lives.

Strangely enough, I find more comfort in funerals as time winds on. How to deal with death? Real families keep coming together for the rituals and rites of final passage, the shared comforts of mourning, the fellowship of memories and stories that retrieve the essence of what Grandma was about. And the best stories locate these people, these families in their communities, extending the sense of belonging across the generations. They show how families survive through the terrors and plagues, the depressions and the failures. The stories cut through the husks and eggshells of our fumbling attempts to create meaning. They get to the heart of what it means to be human—relationships that endure, against the odds.

So it's my resolve to beat back the dull monotonies of a boring existence. I am drawn to seek out significant life even at the margins of safe and predictable stories. If life is too short anyway, why take so many precautions? Why pad our existence with countless protections? I certainly hope to be prudent where we have to, in ways that sustain the goodness of life. But I don't intend to hide timidly behind warnings or run quickly for cover. I am energized by taking the risk and drawn toward a life lived boldly.

Life with meaning is not found hiding in a corner, waiting for the world to happen. We don't deal best with death by building a cult around it. Rather, we turn death into a punctuation mark at the close of a life that made it worthwhile, worthy of our status as creatures who bear the imprint of a Creator with high hopes for us.

I've been more angry than scared about death for a long time now. I don't expect to die gradually. Perhaps I will go out in a flash, protesting against some agony or injustice in the way this weary world is unfolding, probably raging against the violations of God's intentions for our well-being. I once thought I was coming close, during a peace-seeking mission in the Balkans. On a tiny country road in Hungary, up a hill and trying to pass a slow truck in a compact rental car, with another huge truck barreling straight toward me, I had visions of the end that did not require much imagination at all. With centimeters to spare, I shook so badly I had to stop in the next small town.

We don't deal best with death by building a cult around it.

We are all in the process of being delivered from death into life, from lonely isolation into the community of God's coming kingdom. Our family stories are the prelude to the wedding feast that inaugurates the reign of the Lamb of God. The death we are trained to fear is little more than a marker for the transition that releases us into what the Bible and the old hymns call glory. It is a commentary on our lives that we spend so much time in paths small and sordid that we have little or no comprehension left to wrap around the concept of glory. But glory is a life well lived now, and glory is forever. TM

Gerald Shenk recently resumed bicycling in the wide open spaces of Indiana.

Christian mission is not exotic

Jim Bertsche is a member of Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

The following reflections come as a response to the article "Mission as Form of Exoticism" by Leo Hartshorn in the November 2010 issue. My responses are shaped by 25 years of experience in the Republic of Congo with Congo Inland Mission/Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) and another 12 in the home office in Elkhart, Ind.

Hartshorn lodges a series of critiques with which I heartily agree:

- Within the North American Mennonite community, Christian Mission was for decades equated with ministry in distant places.
- Meanwhile "home missions" were seen as less compelling and less glamorous.
- Over time there developed a consequent imbalance in funding, publicity and preparation of personnel.
- There also emerged a tendency to highlight and circulate "foreign missionaries" on home leaves while leaving others quietly at work in inner-city settings or isolated rural areas much less publicized, and this happened amid a society steadily drifting into secularism.
- And, yes, there was a certain fascination with captivating stories and colorful artifacts from distant strange places.

I cannot agree more with Hartshorn when he insists that a truly missional church is equally aware of and concerned about human need situated both south of the equator and around the corner from where we live.

However, the article reflects four inadequate perceptions:

- His article leaves the broad impression that the "foreign mission" enterprise of the past 150 or so years has essentially been driven by a fascination with the exotic. There is no recognition of the enormous sense of urgency that prevailed from the mid-1800s through much of the 1900s, which spawned a host of mission organizations across the western world, including the Mennonite communities of North America. This urgency was born of the conviction that the mandate left by Jesus to his followers to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" had not expired. It was an era when Christian mission was not viewed as an intriguing topic for debate or as a noble humanitarian enterprise or a working vacation. Christian mission was instead born of the conviction that the millions who had never heard about Jesus had to be given that opportunity at whatever cost. And cost there was.
- His article reflects no understanding of the enormous price paid by overseas missionary communities—particularly during the pioneering decades. Stories are told of missionaries assigned to Africa in the late 1800s who packed their supplies in personal caskets since they had no realistic expectation of ever returning to their homelands. Congo Inland Mission sent its first exploratory trio of missionaries to Congo in January 1912. Before year's end, one of the three already lay in an African grave. All this suggests there was something much more profound at work than fascination with the exotic.
- The apparent belief that the missionary enterprise across the years has essentially cast white-skinned people from the west as the unchanging practitioners of mission among people of darker skins is untrue. AIMM will celebrate its centennial year of unbroken ministry in the Congo in 2012. A major focus of celebration will be the publication of stories highlighting how, in the broad sweep of a century, Congolese Christians were the evangelists of their own people and the planters of their own churches.
- Finally, the repeated statement that missionaries have typically clung to roles of authority and power among the churches that emerged from their work is untrue. Once again our experience differed from this assessment. Upon our arrival in the late-1940s, we already found African church councils in place on our major mission posts. These met on a regular basis to seek resolution of conflicts between members, exercise discipline, recommend candidates for baptism and probe opportunities for placement of teacher-evangelists in outlying villages. In 1971, the mission voluntarily annulled its legal status in Congo and merged with the African church. Thereafter, missionaries went to Congo only as invited and served where they were assigned. TM

A drummer at a celebration in the Republic of Congo. Photo provided

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MCC Binational to disband in 2012

Joint Ministry Council will link MCC U.S. and MCC Canada.

Henry Neufeld

Herman Bontrager, MCC Binational board chair, speaks with Arli Klassen, MCC executive director.

In an elementary school in Ethiopia, students received pencils as a gift from a missionary. One of the students, Zenebe Abebe, is now the executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Great Lakes, based in Goshen, Ind. He said he had no idea who had purchased, packed and mailed the pencils. Jesus words: "You are the light of the world," took on new meaning; the pencil became the "light" for him.

That was in 1945. Years later he learned that the pencils came from MCC. "The pencil affirmed my hope, I was encouraged, impressed and empowered to work hard," he says.

Participants at the Mennonite Central CommitteeBinational annual meeting June 10-11 in Abbotsford, British Columbia, listened to this testimony.

During the meetings, Binational chair Herman Bontrager said, "MCC is an arm of the church; it is not a parachurch organization." He acknowledged that MCC has a weakness in how it relates to congregations. He also made a plea to retain a high regard for diversity, to focus on compassion rather than professionalism and to concentrate more on deeds than on words.

Arli Klassen, executive director of MCC, said MCC continues to have strong denominational involvement, with the United States comprising 60 percent and Canada 40 percent of the MCC constituency.

The meeting addressed some of the issues related to the implementation of the New Wineskins strategy (NWS), a three-year process nearing its end. The restructuring will see MCC Binational replaced by MCC U.S. and MCC Canada. Linking the two bodies will be a Joint Ministry Council comprised of representatives from MCC Canada, MCC U.S. and Mennonite World Conference.

To complete this process, bylaws for MCC Canada and MCC U.S. will need approval at the binational meeting this fall. If approval is given, MCC Binational will cease to exist at its final meeting in March 2012, making way for the two new country-based MCCs.

Responding to questions about how MCC U.S. and Canada will operate international programs, Klassen compared it to two parties owning one house.

"Each one can furnish their room as they wish," she said.

Ron Byler, executive director of MCC U.S., sees the NWS process as an opportunity to strengthen relationships with churches and to streamline decision-making.

"MCC Akron will not be able to do everything it has done in the past," Byler said.

The need for interdependence and collaboration increases as there's an increasing gap between the constituency and what MCC promotes, said Klassen. This led to a discussion about two covenants.

A "Covenant for the MCCs in the U.S." sets out the relationship between the area MCCs and MCC U.S. A second covenant draft sets out the relationship between MCC Canada and MCC U.S. Both covenants were approved in principle, with staff asked to work on the details.

Participants approved a change in the relationship between MCC U.S. and Ten Thousand Villages. The approval of the three MCC U.S. appointees to the Villages board is required for CEO appointments and changes to bylaws. Board members provided apprehensive affirmation for the changes.

Other business: Ron Flaming, international program director, said significant attention and resources were directed at disasters in the past year. MCC received more than $19 million for Haiti following its earthquake. He reported that 50 percent of MCC's international workers are from outside North America.

Ken Langeman, director of financial services, reported a slight surplus in the past year and noted that proceeds from thrift shop sales have increased. U.S./Canada joint income exceeded $75 million. Donations from Canada continued to be strong, while donations from the United States showed a small increase, he said.

Jan Martens Janzen reported on issues of MCC worker safety. "MCC takes a lot of precautions to ensure safety of its workers," she said, noting that local partners are important in decisions about MCC workers leaving.

"If workers feel uneasy and ask to leave (a country), we want them to leave," she said. The January upheaval in Egypt resulted in all MCC workers being evacuated and then returning a month later.—*Henry Neufeld for Meetinghouse*

Goshen College reverses anthem decision

Board of directors asks President to find an alternative song by fall

On June 4, the Goshen (Ind.) College board of directors reversed its 2010 decision to play an instrumental version of The Star Spangled Banner before athletic events. In a statement released on June 6, the board said it has asked President Jim Brenneman to "find an alternative … that fits with sports tradition, that honors country and that resonate with Goshen College's core values and respects the views of diverse constituencies."

A news release from the college on June 6 did not give a timeline for finding the alternative. But board president Rick Stiffney said he expects the alternative to be ready by the beginning of the fall athletic schedule.

Students, faculty and alumni also received a "decision statement" from the board of directors on June 6. In it, the board acknowledged some shortcomings in the earlier process that led to its Feb. 13, 2010, decision to have the national anthem played.

While students, faculty and staff had opportunities to provide feedback before the 2010 decision, the statement said, "It would have been helpful had there been opportunities for greater alumni participation."

According to the statement, the board asked the school's President's Council to create a formal "listen and learn" process as preparation for its June meeting.

"Since making [the 2010 decisions],"says the statement, "the board has carefully considered this issue and the feedback of thousands of alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends who offered opinions, advice and prayers over the past 16 months … the board believes the listen and learn process demonstrated the Goshen College community could discuss difficult issues with civility and mutual respect."

The process also revealed a fault line between Mennonites and non-Mennonites connected to the college, with Mennonites generally more negative about playing the anthem, while non-Mennonites were more positive.

"Still, the issue could not be reduced to a clash between those two groups," said the statement, "and there was overlap on many of their viewpoints."

Finding an alternative to the national anthem was left in the hands of Brenneman, and the board does not expect to review the decision again.

"Discussion on the issues surrounding and raised by the playing of the National Anthem … will and should continue," said the statement. "The official discussion, though, at Goshen College about this issue is concluded with the board's decision."

In the week following the announcement, the college was inundated with media requests. Richard Aguirre, director of public relations, said on June 13 that they declined invitations from six regional talk shows scattered across the country. Afterward, he researched the talk shows.

"I checked on them," Aguirre said, "and found out they were strongly conservative and posted insulting things about the college. They just wanted someone [on the air] to attack us."

Fox Radio and Fox News were the most persistent national media.

"Fox News used language saying Goshen College had 'banned' the anthem," Aguirre said. "Fox misrepresented our rationale and would not correct it even after we asked them to do so. … Most of the criticism we received was from people who heard the spin that we 'banned' it."

The college did not ban the anthem. The June 6 news release explained there were differences of opinion among board members, and discontinuing the anthem was necessary to maintain the school's unity.—*Everett J. Thomas*

What local papers said

Both Elkhart County, Ind., daily newspapers published editorials opining about the Goshen College decision to no longer play the national anthem. Here are excerpts:

The First Amendment to the Constitution gives us freedom of religion and freedom of speech. … Let's get one thing straight: Mennonites don't have a tenet in their faith to hate America, so let's stop the vitriolic attacks to the contrary. But through their faith, they place God before country and strongly believe in pacifism. Their decision to reject the "Star Spangled Banner" reflects those beliefs. … What's un-American is the idea that all Americans must be forced to adhere to some sort of patriotic orthodoxy.—*The Elkhart Truth*, June 7

We know the leaders at Goshen College are well within their constitutional rights to either play the anthem or not play the anthem. It's their ship, and they can sail it in whatever direction they choose. Still, we are disappointed that a system that seemed to be well thought-out and working will sink into a sea of discord. … It seems the question at the root of this issue is what kind of college does the board of directors want Goshen College to be. Is it a college so firmly rooted in the beliefs of the Mennonite church that it actually discourages the diversity its leaders try so hard to embrace? Or is it an institution that practices what it preaches and does its best to make its non-Mennonite students, faculty and guests more comfortable?—*The Goshen News*, June 8

Bethany will accept tuition vouchers

New law requires U.S. flags in classrooms, daily opportunity to say Pledge.

Beginning with the next school year, Indiana will have one of the most comprehensive voucher programs in the United States. The vouchers may be used for private school tuition. Bethany Christian Schools, an Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference school in Goshen, Ind., plans to accept the vouchers.

"The whole [vouchers] initiative is rooted in the idea of giving parents more choice for the schools they want for their children," said Allan Dueck, Bethany's principal, on June 14. "This is something that people of means have had for a long time."

The new program, however, stipulates that any private school accepting voucher money must have a U.S. flag in each classroom and must provide students with a daily opportunity to voluntarily say the Pledge of Allegiance. On June 13, the Bethany school board agreed to a plan that Dueck said is intended to be respectful of the law while maintaining integrity with the school's mission.

Each classroom will have a poster with the U.S. flag first and then the flags of all the countries of origin for the current student body. This follows a practice of many years: Bethany has displayed the flags of the countries from which students originated over the last decade, with the U.S. flag displayed according to the Flag Code. At the bottom of the poster will be the words, "Bethany's Global Community."

Students will have an opportunity to say the Pledge during a period of silence at the start of each day. Dueck said that in a beginning-of-the-year chapel, his administration will explain that during the period of silence, students can recite the Pledge of Allegiance, the Lord's Prayer, the Christian Pledge of Allegiance written by June Alliman Yoder and J. Nelson Kraybill, or just remain silent.

"We are comfortable complying with the law as long as it does not conflict with our values," Dueck said. "We also want to be a welcoming community for students from other traditions, as long as we hold true to our values."

Federal income guidelines for free and reduced-price lunches will establish the monetary amount in the vouchers supplied to parents. A family of four with income under the guidelines' ceiling will receive $5,400 for high school students and $4,500 for middle school students. Families with incomes above the federal guidelines but less than 150 percent of the guidelines will receive lesser amounts.

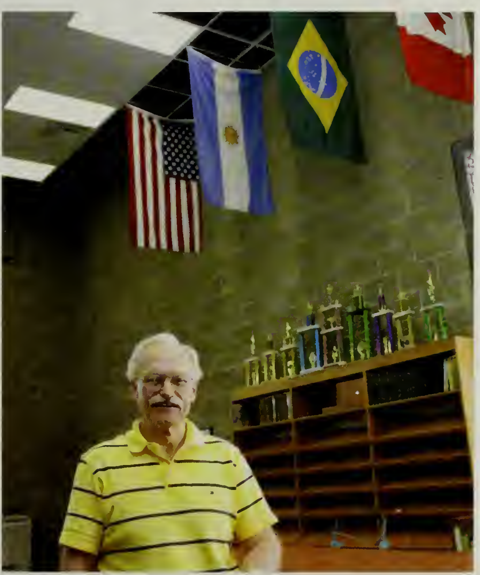
Funding for private school vouchers will reduce funds available for public schools, which created some tension between Bethany and at least one other Mennonite educator. Bruce Stahly, superintendent of the Goshen Community School system and a member of College Mennonite Church, publicly criticized Bethany's decision to accept vouchers.

"I do find it interesting how Bethany is maneuvering that issue within the Mennonite church," Stahly was reported as saying in a June 5 article in *The Goshen News*. "I don't know what they are saying by putting a flag in every classroom and saying the Pledge every day, which is one of the requirements of the bill."

But for Dueck, the decision to accept vouchers and comply with the requirements is about equal access.

"We believe this program will allow us to better achieve our commitment to serve all students, no matter what their finances," Dueck wrote in a June 14 letter to local Mennonite pastors and Bethany parents.

Bethany has grades four through 12 with a projected enrollment of 260 for the 2011-2012 school year. According to Dueck, approximately 10 percent of the current student body would qualify for the new vouchers. Bethany provides $450,000 each year in tuition assistance from its budget. Dueck said that between the voucher money and tuition assistance, it would cost some poverty families nothing to enroll their children at Bethany.—*Everett J. Thomas*



Everett J. Thomas

Bethany Christian School principal Allan Dueck stands in the school's library under the flags from the countries of origin represented by the school's student body.

Fewer churches leaving Mennonite Church USA

Churches from Western District, Lancaster Conference among those withdrawn.

Withdrawals from Mennonite Church USA continue, but at a slower pace. Fourteen churches left the denomination in the past two years, according to a *Mennonite Weekly Review* survey of conference ministers.

That's a much lower rate of loss than occurred between 2000 and 2007, when about 120 congregations exited.

The departures account for the bulk of a trend in which MC USA had a net loss of 191 congregations and 15,694 members over 10 years. That goes back to just before MC USA's founding in a 2002 merger of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Among those that left in 2009 and 2010, two congregations broke ties of more than a century—in one case, nearly three centuries. First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie, Kan., a charter member of Western District Conference (WDC) in 1892, withdrew in November 2010. Indiantown Mennonite Church of Ephrata, Pa., part of Lancaster Mennonite Conference since 1725, left in December 2009.

Both congregations are now independent.

Among MC USA's 21 area conferences, Lancaster has lost the most churches over the past decade. Thirty-nine congregations withdrew between 2000 and 2006. Seven of the 14 departures from MC USA in 2009-10 were from Lancaster.

Those that leave generally resist changes to conservative theology and practice. The creation of MC USA added another point of contention. John L. Ruth of Harleysville, Pa., who wrote a 2001 history of Lancaster Conference, believes some former Lancaster members considered MC USA an identity imposed from the outside or the top down.

"When Mennonite Church USA was accepted by the leadership of Lancaster Conference, it felt to some like something that was not generated by the peoplehood that was asked to accept it," he said.

At Indiantown Mennonite Church, some members believed Lancaster Conference had abandoned sound doctrine.

Jay S. Weaver, former associate pastor and current lead pastor, didn't feel good about ending a historic affiliation but supported the departure.

"Our sentimental feelings, our traditions, shouldn't determine the future of the church if it's headed in the wrong direction," he says.

Indiantown, with about 165 members, was one of Lancaster's oldest congregations. Members worshiped in homes for nearly a century before building a meetinghouse in 1819.

More than 75 percent of voting members approved the withdrawal, Weaver says.

"Our main concern was the next generation," he says. "We have a lot of young parents who are concerned about the direction the church is going."

Steve Martin, Indiantown's former lead pastor, thought leaving was a mistake. He resigned as pastor last June.

"I was disappointed in the decision," Martin says. "I felt people were misled by what they were hearing."

He says this included accusations that Lancaster Conference bishops were teaching heresy.

Martin and Weaver say Indiantown withdrew because members disagreed with the conference's acceptance of women's ordination and divorce and remarriage, because they disliked joining MC USA and because they felt the denomination did not take a firm stand against homosexuality.

Lester L. Zook, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie, says older members generally were the ones who most regretted ending the congregation's 118-year

(Continued on page 43)

Congregations that left Mennonite Church USA in 2009 and 2010

Central District Conference: Comins (Mich.) Mennonite Church

Central Plains Conference: Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Doland, S.D.

Lancaster Conference: Hinkletown Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.; Lichty Mennonite Church, Terre Hill, Pa.; Diamond Street Mennonite Church, Philadelphia; South Seventh Street Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa.; Emmanuel Worship Center, Bronx, N.Y.; Indiantown Mennonite Church of Ephrata, Pa.; International Christian Community Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Indiana-Michigan Conference: Coldsprings Christian Fellowship, Mancelona, Mich.

Pacific Northwest Conference: Prince of Peace Community Church, Corvallis, Ore.,

South Central Conference: Protection (Kan.) Mennonite Church

Southeast Conference: New Jerusalem Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

Western District Conference: First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie, Kan.

DNA connects Swiss, Puerto Rican Mennonites

Darvin L. Martin shares findings that he and Santiago come from same 'tribe.'

Puerto Rico is among the last places one would expect to find ancient relatives of the Swiss-German Martin family of Lancaster, Pa. Yet a recent analysis of Lancaster Historical Society director Rolando Santiago's DNA unlocked a secret. As I compared my DNA to that of every staff member of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, it was Rolando who matched me the most closely. My Swiss Martin ancestry and Rolando's Puerto Rican Santiago ancestry ultimately originate within the same "tribe."

While DNA testing often reveals unforeseen family connections that may be difficult to comprehend, research into the political and geographic history of ancient Europe gives us significant clues as to how and why my connection with Rolando is possible.

Rolando Santiago (left) and Darvin Martin

According to family tradition, Rolando's ancestry derives from Galicia, the Spanish province in the northwestern portion of Spain. His family name is a tribute to the Way of St. James, the ninth century Catholic pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in central Galicia and the supposed site of St. James' burial. His ancestors probably settled in Puerto Rico between 1508 and 1528, during a period of Spanish colonization initiated by gold seekers—mainly single men who married native (Taíno) women.

The Mennonite Martin family points to the Emmental village of Eriswil, located in the eastern part of Canton Bern in an area known for a strong Anabaptist presence in the late 1500s and through the 1600s. The surname Martin derives from St. Martin of Tours (316-397), an early Catholic bishop who was revered by many in modern-day France and western Switzerland. Within the Emmental, the surname Martin probably came into common use through the church at Kirchberg, west of Eriswil, which was dedicated to St. Martin as early as 1208.

Why are the Santiago families of Spanish Galicia related to the Martin families of the Swiss Emmental? As a first clue, the Spanish dialect spoken today in Galicia has both Celtic and Germanic influences. Roman history reveals that a portion of the Germanic tribe known as the Suebi migrated from the regions north of Lake Constance in Germany to the Roman province of Galicia between 406 and 409 A.D.

Rolando's paternal ancestor was likely among the people who took part in this mass migration. During the Roman era, my Martin ancestors also lived in the region north of Lake Constance and made up a portion of the population of the Kingdom of Swabia—a name derived from the Suebi.

The ancestors of these Santiago and Martin families were part of the Suebi tribe prior to the mass migration to Galicia in 406. The ancestors of the Martins remained behind and probably lived for several centuries north of Lake Constance as part of the Kingdom of Swabia before moving south and west into modern Canton Zurich, and then eventually into the Emmental, around 760 years ago.

These movements can be traced nearly perfectly within the political history of the time. Through marriage, the feudal Kyburg lands near Winterthur were passed on to the Swabian counts of Dillingen in 1078. This allowed migration from Swabia into modern Switzerland. The Kyburgs continued as vassals of the Duke of Swabia and expanded their holdings to the south and west. By 1250, they founded the town of Huttwil, only five kilometers north of Eriswil, where the paper trail of the Martins begin.

By the time my Martin ancestors were converting to Anabaptism, Rolando's paternal ancestry had already moved to Puerto Rico.

The Swiss Yoder and Zimmerman families also relate very closely to the Martins and share this same ancestral profile with Rolando Santiago's ancestry. One can think of these families each as branches on the same tree. The Martin, Yoder and Zimmerman families form a tight cluster, sharing a common ancestor as recently as 700 years ago and probably all diverge from one man who helped expand the Kyburgs into the Emmental.

It is only after tracing back further than this that Hispanic lines begin to converge with the same cluster. And Rolando's family is not the first. The Galarza family from Mexico and the Cavalcanti family from Brazil who both have Galician ancestry begin to connect to this same subset of the Swabian families immediately prior to 406 A.D. While part of the same tribe, Rolando's parental ancestry converges to these others at a much earlier date—perhaps as early as 4,000 years ago, when the proto-Suebi were living further to the north in modern eastern Germany.

This is but one of countless examples how DNA connects families across time zones, cultures, religions and ethnic barriers in surprising and complex ways. We are far closer to those who are very different from us than anyone would have guessed prior to the knowledge of one's deep ancestry—made possible through studying DNA.—*Darvin L. Martin. This article originally ran in Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society's June 2011 issue of* The Mirror. *Reprinted with permission.*

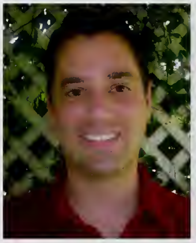
'Peace Pastor' blog reaches thousands

Houston pastor Marty Troyer encourages others to 'speak faith publicly.'

When Martin Troyer, a Houston pastor, began blogging for his church nearly two years ago, about 30 people read his posts.

Now his blog, "The Peace Pastor," reaches an online audience of tens of thousands of people. On one occasion, his blog post received 15,000 hits within six hours of publishing a post.

This success story starts in fall 2008, when Troyer began serving as pastor of Houston Mennonite Church. Six months into his time there, the leadership team posed the question, "What does it mean for us, as a Mennonite congregation, to offer a distinctly Christian peace presence in Houston?"



Those on the team agreed that a pastoral blog provided one way to address this question. Troyer, who likes to write, began blogging. He tied the blog to the church's web page, and it received few hits—mostly from church members. In March 2009, Troyer contacted the *Houston Chronicle* web editors but didn't hear back from them.

In December 2010, the leadership team revisited their question and looked at how to be missional with a "larger public platform," says Troyer. Several months later, the online Belief editor for the *Houston Chronicle*, Kate Shellnutt, came across Houston Mennonite's website. The peace stance and information on peace and justice intrigued her.

In February, she contacted Troyer. "What she said next made me almost fall out of my chair," he says.

"I want you to blog as a Houstonian about peace and from a Christian perspective," Troyer remembers Shellnutt saying.

Troyer says, "This is just what the leadership team at Houston Mennonite had been discussing for the past two years."

Within three days, Shellnutt had Troyer's blog up and running. His first public blog, on Feb. 27, entitled, "In Praise of Nonviolent Resistance," received a lot of traffic.

"Since then we've been going 60 miles an hour," says Troyer. Now, just a few months later, Troyer ranks as the third or fourth most-read of Chron.com's Faith Leader bloggers, which include some 25 leaders and 40 lay people.

"It's absolutely electrifying," he says. "We've been talking about being missional. This is my missional experiment."

Troyer says many of his friends focus their energies internally and within Mennonite Church USA. For example, their ultimate aspirations include preaching at a Mennonite convention, having an article printed in *The Mennonite* (see Troyer's article "Stewards of Grace" in this issue on page 32) or a book published by Herald Press.

However, Troyer says, he now lacks an interest in those venues and finds excitement in writing for a wider, non-Mennonite community.

"We're great at living our faith publicly but not at speaking our faith publicly," he says. "Go out there and try it. Preach the gospel of peace."

Troyer's blog focuses on peace and justice issues but moves beyond "saying no to war," he says. "I could write about 1,000 different things that relate to peace." Examples of Troyer's blog headlines include: "Jesus, Israel-Palestine and the Bible," "Executing the Innocent," "Road Peace on Rage Road" and "A Primer on Hating Your (Cyber!) Neighbor." He hopes readers see his blog as not only a political message but also very Christian.

Shellnutt says that while Mennonites are a minority in the Houston area, Troyer's approach in his blogs is "relevant, relatable and meaningful."

"[He] stands firm in his faith and responds gracefully, even to those who disagree with him," she says.

Initially, Troyer declined to respond to readers who commented on his blog. But more recently he has interacted with those commenting—many of whom post negative statements. He hesitated because he did not want it to consume his time, and he was unsure whether his interactions would build healthier online dialogue.

Still, Troyer sees small improvements. For example, one commenter posted extremely negative comments, such as, "You just wait and see, no one will read this stuff from this liberal, socialist pastor." Over time the commenter has backed down and now posts gentler statements.

These dynamics of online interactions have changed Troyer's spiritual life. While he sees the many benefits of the blogosphere, it has also "reinforced the true power of the congregation," he says.

In fact, Troyer includes an invitation to the church's website and to the church in his online posts. A few of Troyer's readers have visited Houston Mennonite's worship services. More significantly, the blog opened conversation opportunities for Troyer with individuals in the community and church, including a lawyer who lives beside the church.

"He read a post on the death penalty and connected it to his Christian faith in a way he hasn't in 20 years," Troyer says.

Go to http://blog.chron.com/thepeacepastor/ to read Troyer's blog.—*Anna Groff*

Official account of Spaulding dismissal

There are rumors and varying accounts of Randall Spaulding's dismissal from the Binational Worship Council. This is a brief but official Mennonite Church USA account of our understanding of what happened. When the Binational council was formed, it seemed natural for Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) to appoint Randall to the committee, since he had participated in a number of other such tasks, including the editing of two hymnal supplements. So, at the time the Binational Worship Council was formed in April 2008, they took counsel with denominational leaders, at which time Randall was appointed as one of the representatives of Mennonite Church USA.

MPN knew that Randall had divorced his wife of 19 years before coming out as gay, so MPN made the appointment with an understanding from denominational leaders that Randall could serve as long as he was not in an active gay relationship. (Not everyone involved remembers the agreement in the same way; Randall and council members thought the only limit was that he not serve as chair of the committee).

Later, when Randall told the Southeast Mennonite Conference he was pursuing a same-sex relationship, they revoked his ministerial credentials. After joining in a marriage covenant with another man in June 2010, Randall raised the question of his ongoing participation on the Council in October 2010. In January, MPN sought counsel from denominational staff, who conferred with Southeast Mennonite Conference and with the denominational moderators. All agreed that although Randall was serving well from the viewpoint of the committee, it seemed best for him not to continue in such a visible role after his pastoral credentials had been suspended; substantial groups in the church could not support his ministry. It was also deemed to be consistent with the membership guidelines adopted at Nashville. This was communicated to Randall in a phone conversation with good mutual exchange. In the end, Randall indicated that he would not step down voluntarily; he would need to be asked to quit. After further counsel, it was deemed best to honor the conference's decision and discontinue his appointment through Mennonite Church USA.—*Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA executive director*

Fewer churches leaving

(Continued from page 40)

history with WDC.

"I would say that is the biggest drawback in the minds of members," Zook says of breaking the longtime relationship.

At a congregational meeting on Nov. 14, 2010, 67 percent voted to withdraw, barely the two-thirds majority needed for approval. The church has an average attendance of about 155. Zook had mixed feelings about the decision.

"I feel that as congregations pull out of conferences, that weakens the evangelical voice that is allowed to speak to conference issues," he says. But he says some members felt they shouldn't align with churches that they believe take theological stances contrary to the Bible.

"There are congregations in the conference that are at polar opposites from First Mennonite of Pretty Prairie," he says. "By being part of the conference, are we guilty by association? That was part of the thinking."

Zook and Lynn Stucky, chair of the deacon board, declined to cite specific issues that led to the rift with the conference.

"It was biblical and theological issues we didn't agree with," Stucky says. "We're not abandoning our Mennonite heritage. We want to remain active with MCC, MDS and other programs we've been involved with."

Stucky and Zook agree that the withdrawal left the congregation in need of healing. "I would not say everyone is at peace with it," Zook says of the decision. "We are trying to promote healing as we can."

During 2009-10, conference ministers reported the addition of 20 congregations, some of which are church plants. That number would be larger if all church plants were counted. The closing of several congregations accounts for part of the change in denominational membership. MC USA had a net loss of 15 congregations in 2009-10.—*Paul Schrag of* Mennonite Weekly Review. *This first appeared in* MWR*'s Feb. 14 issue. Reprinted with permission*

Endowment to expand pastoral development

Full-time internships available for those who say 'yes' to the call

An endowment dedicated to funding long-term pastoral internships for graduate students—initiated by Duane Beck, pastor at Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, and Terry Shue, Mennonite Church USA leadership development director—will be named in honor of Peter and Rheta May Wiebe of Glendale, Ariz. (pictured), to commemorate their sustained missional and pastoral leadership throughout the denomination. Mennonite Foundation will oversee the administration and investment of the endowment.

"Naming the endowment after Peter and Rheta May Wiebe recognizes the couple's complementary roles in the pastorate," says Beck. "They have a passion for pastoral leadership and an enduring love for the Mennonite church."

Funds will be distributed to seminary students and recent graduates confident about their call to be pastoral leaders within the denomination and who seek to develop their pastoral identity and skills through full-time congregational internships. The endowment will give special attention to suitably matching interns with mentoring pastors and their congregations.

Peter and Rheta May Wiebe

Over the course of 46 years, Peter Wiebe mentored 20 pastoral interns in four different congregations, helping these pastors develop their identities and preparing them to work in congregations and their communities around the country. "As I guided interns, it became abundantly clear to me that experience alone without reflective awareness would not allow for the development of pastoral identity," Wiebe says.

"Peter has been very instrumental—inspiring a ripple effect, as those he has mentored go on to mentor others," says Shue.

Beck interned under the supervision of Wiebe and Shue under the supervision of Beck. Both Beck and Shue credit their internships with having provided a strong foundation for their pastoral formation and development, and both have shared their passion with other interns.

Beck and Shue believe that full-time internships of nine months to a year will allow developing pastors to understand their place within the communities they serve in a way that classroom learning and part-time internships cannot."To increase the number of places with full-time internships is important, because it will open up opportunities for people who are beginning to create a pastoral identity," says Shue.

The endowment to be named after the Wiebes is intended to supplement existing internship programs, such as the Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP) of the Mennonite colleges, which for more than 20 years has given undergraduate students opportunities to explore their call to ministry.

"We don't want people to use this fund for inquiry; we want it to be for people who have said, Yes, and this is where the call has taken me," says Shue. "We are looking to complement the schools, not compete with the schools."

Beck and Shue want the endowment to fund internships for students who are interested in pastoral positions in unique Mennonite settings. Raleigh Mennonite Church, where Beck is a pastor, is located in an urban area and is closely connected with Mennonite churches in the nearby cities of Durham and Chapel Hill. The community established by these connections has drawn in students from Duke Divinity School in Durham who are interested in interning in Mennonite, urban and missional congregations.

For Beck, the tools necessary to become a missional pastor develop as individuals build relationships in the community surrounding their church.

"Part of pastoral skill is knowing how to network at all levels in your city—with other churches, nonprofits and neighborhood associations," Beck says.

The program will allow students at non-Anabaptist seminaries who have been called to Anabaptist ministry during their study or who have attended graduate school with the purpose of becoming Mennonite pastors to receive funds from the endowment.

"Right now in the Mennonite church we have quite a few non-Mennonite-trained pastors taking on the task of leading an Anabaptist congregation without an understanding of our theology and faith and an appreciation for our heritage," says Peter Wiebe. "An internship for such students would be even more important, it seems to me."

Shue adds: "There are people all around the world who are looking at Anabaptism as something that is extremely positive. There are non-Mennonite schools—like Duke Divinity School, for example—where Anabaptists and Anabaptism hold a lot of interest. This program is an opportunity to bring that beyond the academic realm and pair up interested students with ministry leaders who have struggled through the missional context themselves. It opens up broader possibilities for the future of the Mennonite church."—*Johnny Kauffman for Mennonite Church USA*

South African elder celebrates learning

Wise elders usually expected to be listened to and served—not taught

Although about 90 years of age, Amos Sobambela still celebrates learning. He enters into study of God's Word at Bethany Bible School in Mthatha, South Africa, with enthusiasm that belies his age. Such focus and energy at a time of life when many are considering retirement are remarkable anywhere in the world, but they are especially countercultural among the Xhosa, Sobambela's ethnic group.

As a church secretary of the Church of God in Zion, Sobambela has arrived at a position in life where, as a wise elder, he can expect to be listened to and served—not taught.

"In Xhosa culture, there is a time for service and a time for being served, a life-stage for receiving instruction and a life-stage for giving it," says Joe Sawatzky, a Mennonite Mission Network teacher at Bethany.

Sobambela is not the only elder that Bethany Bible School serves. Visitors are often startled by so many "old people who still want to learn" when they walk into an animated session of scriptural study at Bethany, Sawatzky says.

"Perhaps their surprise is due to the fact that in most countries, learners are people between the ages of 5 and 22, between primary school and university," Sawatzky says.

Amos Sobambela

Another mature Bethany Bible School student leader, Mavis Tshandu, is a nurse who has experience in HIV-AIDS education. Tshandu conducted a workshop in her area of expertise for Bethany students in March. This workshop, part of a series that addresses social issues affecting South African society, empowered students with tools to tackle what often seems like an overwhelming burden in their communities.

At the end of the HIV-AIDS workshop, Sobambela says, "Before Jesus Christ left this earth, he asked his father not to take his disciples out of the world but to keep them."

As long as he has not been taken out of the world, Sobambela continues, he knows that God intends to "keep him" by renewing him through knowledge.

Sobambela sees the privilege of learning as proof of God's love for him, Sawatzky says. "Amos Sobambela is, like his biblical namesake, also a prophet."

At a Bethany workshop on community mobilization last October, Thandi Gumbi, a Zulu guest instructor in her 30s, received a remarkable statement of hospitality and humility from Tata K. Zangqa, a Xhosa bishop four decades her senior.

"We are your children, and you are our teacher," Zangqa said.

Sawatzky explains that according to culture, Gumbi was Zangqa's "intombazana," or "little girl, one who could be ordered to fetch his tea."

With these few words, the bishop, like Jesus, laid aside his privileges of gender, age and insider status. Such recognition by an old man is a work of the Holy Spirit, a confession of faith, Sawatzky says.

Though Bethany Bible School was founded in 1982 to train leaders in African-Initiated Churches, some leaders of mainline churches are taking note of the far-reaching education Bethany offers. African-Initiated Churches, churches that were founded by Africans with worship and practice meaningful to local Christians, differ from mainline denominations, which were planted by expatriate missionaries.

When Anna and Joe Sawatzky met with Fikile Mbabama, the Anglican canon of the Mthatha Diocese of St. John's, to discuss the raise of rental fees for the office space they share, the canon said, "I have seen the fruits of your labors." Mbabama told the Sawatzkys that prior to coming to Mthatha he ministered in a rural area where there were many African-Initiated Churches.

He was impressed with the quality of preaching in some of the African-initiated congregations. When he affirmed the leaders, Mbabama reported that the leaders replied, "Yes, we are going to Bethany."

Students from 45 African-initiated denominations travel up to 60 miles, many in the cramped conditions of minibus taxis, to study at Bethany Bible School six times each year.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network collaborate through the Southern Africa Partnership Council to walk alongside this ministry.

Anna and Joe Sawatzky and their four young sons have lived in Mthatha and have worked through Mennonite Mission Network since 2006.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Noticed and welcomed or invisible and lonely?

What does someone who has been a visitor in 40 different congregations in 10 months have to say about congregational hospitality? Quite a lot.

Following my retirement as associate pastor of First Mennonite Church in Urbana, Ill., my husband and I took the opportunity to worship with a variety of congregations. Recalling Diana Butler Bass' lecture at Pastors' Week (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in January 2009) about the non-negotiable importance of congregational hospitality, especially to visitors, I decided to do an informal research project to rate the hospitality we received at the churches we visited. Of the 40 congregations we attended, five were nondenominational, and the remainder represented 19 denominations.

We attended large, medium and small congregations; urban and rural churches; congregations representing a wide range of theological perspectives; ethnically diverse and nondiverse congregations; churches with a contemporary worship style and those that were more traditional.

In each congregation I gathered anecdotal data about hospitality in seven areas: website information and design, parking, signage outside and inside, the quality and quantity of welcome prior to the worship service, the worship service, the quality and quantity of welcome following the service, and follow-up. Although I believe all seven areas create a total package of congregational hospitality, there are three I would list as most important: website information and design, the quality and quantity of greeting before a service, and the hospitality of the actual worship service.

At the outset of this project I had no idea of the importance I would soon give to a congregation's website, especially since I am not technologically savvy. However, after carefully perusing over 40 of them, I have come to regard a well-designed and easy-to-maneuver website as an act of hospitality. Many potential visitors are checking out congregations online and forming an initial impression without ever setting foot in a building. Although not all congregations will choose to develop a website, I offer these suggestions to those who do:

1. A church's home page should clearly post the two things a visitor needs to know—the address of the church and the time of worship. It was surprising how many websites neglected to have these readily available for a newcomer. On one congregation's website, I had to open six different links before I could find the time of the worship service. Correct or incorrect, the impression I got was that this congregation did not care if visitors came or not.

2. In addition to the address and time of worship, websites provide visitors with other helpful information: maps, parking instructions if space is limited, mission statements, tips on what to expect in a typical worship service, denominational information and an introduction to local church leadership. Online sermons give the visitor a glimpse into the theology of a congregation. Calendars indicate both the activity level of a congregation and whether those activities are ones a visitor would be interested in. From online bulletins a visitor can see what kind of music the congregation prefers and how much importance is given to Christian education. From posted pictures, a potential visitor could observe the age, gender and racial diversity in the congregation.

3. Although it takes a lot of time and effort to keep websites current, up-to-date information announces, "Here is what we are doing right now. Come and join us." Out-of-date information advertises a congregation's lack of attention to details. Worse yet, it can actually mislead visitors. One Sunday I arrived for a worship service at the time announced on the congregation's website, only to find the pastor delivering the benediction. Obviously no one had adjusted the information on the website, so how was a visitor to know the congregation went to an earlier starting time in the summer? My conclusion? This congregation did not care much about attracting new people.

After 10 months of visiting churches, I believe the single most important aspect of hospitality to newcomers is the quality and quantity of the greeting before the worship service begins. For most visitors, walking into a new church takes courage, and many, including myself, are out of our comfort zone in a new worship environment. We found, from the beginning to the end of this project, that the initial greetings we experienced in a congregation colored the lasting impression we had of that church. We often received warm and sincere greetings. We experienced smiles and friendly words that made us relax and feel comfortable—made us feel like someone cared that we were there and gave us a little taste of community. We also received greetings that were cold and flat, greetings where there was no spirit of joy, and unfriendly greetings that actually reduced me to tears on two occasions.

It should be the responsibility and privilege for all of us to greet visitors on a Sunday morning. But it is especially important to implement good welcoming practices for those assigned as greeters or ushers. Once again a few reflections from our visits:

1. Not everyone is well-suited to be an usher or greeter any more than everyone is suited to be a Sunday school teacher or song leader. It is important to tap those who are especially gifted in the area of extending warm hospitality or who are willing to be trained.

2. There is much more to a hospitable greeting than handing out bulletins, and the training of greeters is helpful. It was always obvious to us which congregations had trained their greeters about visitor hospitality and which had not.

3. Greeters and ushers should be familiar enough with the congregation to be able to recognize new faces and welcome accordingly. The exception to this might be if the congregation is so large that newcomers cannot easily be identified. Even then, however, the careful training of greeters can result in a sincere and friendly welcome for both newcomers and regulars.

4. We enjoyed being welcomed multiple times before worship by strategically placed greeters and especially appreciated when they pointed out restrooms, coat racks, offices, fellowship space and Sunday school rooms.

5. We found it hospitable to be given the name of the person or people greeting us and likewise appreciated being asked our names.

6. Most visitors feel awkward or uncomfortable finding a seat on their own in a crowded sanctuary. I would have avoided embarrassment one Sunday if a greeter or usher had assisted me in finding a seat. I arrived during the preservice singing, and the sanctuary was crowded. Because worshipers were standing to sing, it was difficult to see empty seats. I slipped into a row toward the back, but just as we were about to sit down, the person next to me said, "You'll have to go sit somewhere else. This is where I always sit."

7. The attention given to the hospitable greeting of visitors also increases the quality of welcome to regular attendees. Once visitors are in the sanctuary, the opportunities for hospitality continue. Do other worshipers acknowledge visitors, especially those sitting nearby? Is there a written welcome to visitors in the bulletin? Are visitors publicly welcomed by the worship leader or pastor? Do visitors have the opportunity to introduce themselves or to register their attendance in some way? Are there easy-to-understand directives from worship leaders and song leaders about different aspects of the service? Will visitors know whether they are invited to participate in congregational rituals, and if so, are there clear instructions on how to proceed? Does the language used in worship exclude visitors by using only first names during announcements and sharing time? Is there an overuse of acronyms and "insider" humor during the service that excludes newcomers? Are visitors invited to a time of fellowship following the service? Are visitors left awkwardly alone during the fellowship hour?

Each congregation we visited had a palpable atmosphere of hospitality or nonhospitality. We could tell if people were happy and excited to see each other. We could sense when there was an aura of anticipation about what the morning would bring. We could gauge the level of joy in being together. From our observations, we could discern not only whether community was important to a congregation but whether it might be open to adding new people to their community.

Many of the congregations we visited seemed almost fearful of overextending their welcome—perhaps apprehensive about chasing away a newcomer with too much attention. However, the fear of overextending hospitality is not an excuse for lukewarm hospitality. Take a chance; err on the side of friendliness. Churches rarely get a second chance with visitors. Most visitors will find sincere and effusive hospitality a gift, maybe a gift worth opening again and again.

The low point in our hospitality project came when, on two consecutive Sundays, we were entirely ignored. On the first Sunday, we had to search for our own bulletins in the foyer. On the next, the usher literally thrust the bulletin into my face without a word. Not one person spoke to us before, during or after either worship service, and the worship leaders and pastors did not acknowledge visitors in any way. On the way home from the second church, my husband wanted to stop at Home Depot and check out their new selection of perennials. Within a few minutes of walking in the front door, no less than six clerks greeted us with "Good morning. So glad you are here." Or, "Welcome to Home Depot; let us know if there is anything we can do for you." My husband mumbled, "I think if you want to be warmly greeted on a Sunday morning, Home Depot might be the place to go."

Thankfully, total visitor anonymity was not what we experienced in most churches we visited, but those two Sundays helped me realize that congregations tend to fall into one of the following categories:

1. Visitor hospitality is important, and we have done and will continue to do everything we can to welcome and attract visitors to this congregation.
2. Hospitality to visitors is important, and even though we are unsure of how to improve in this area, we are willing to take steps to become a truly hospitable congregation.
3. We are happy when visitors come, but we are not interested in exploring ways to improve our hospitality.
4. We are not particularly interested in growing our church; we're happy with the way things are.

If congregations want to share the good news of Jesus Christ and the joy of belonging to a community of faith, they must strive to be churches in categories one or two. Diana Butler Bass, in her book *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, writes: "True Christian hospitality is a central practice of the Christian faith. Christians welcome strangers as we ourselves have been welcomed into God through the love of Jesus Christ. Through hospitality, Christians imitate God's welcome."

It was an honor to visit such a variety of churches. I have a new and deep appreciation for what it means to be a visitor. I know firsthand what it means to be noticed and welcomed in a congregation. I also know what it means to be invisible and lonely on a Sunday morning in church. I believe, now more than ever, that we are called to welcome lavishly those who enter our sanctuary doors in the name of Jesus—the One who practiced such lavish hospitality himself.—*Cindy Massanari Breeze*

Online users can participate in Pittsburgh 2011

Social media will benefit individuals unable to attend convention in July.

This summer, for the first time, people who are not physically present at a Mennonite Church USA convention will be able to participate in churchwide delegate conversations along with conventiongoers.

Through live video and audio streaming, Twitter, Facebook and more, people will be able to follow delegate sessions at the 2011 Mennonite Church USA convention in Pittsburgh from anywhere. Through real-time chat rooms hosted by volunteer moderators in the delegate sessions, online users will be able to discern alongside delegates.

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, Mennonite Church USA convention planning director, calls the efforts a trial run for alternate-site participation during future conventions.

"This will help us understand the pros and cons for having a 'virtual delegate' option," Swartzendruber Miller says.

Online users will not have voting privileges in Pittsburgh. Chris Rahe, Mennonite Church USA web services director, says that while virtual services will augment conventiongoers' experiences, the largest benefits will be for people unable to attend convention.

Harry Jarrett, lead pastor of Neffsville (Pa.) Mennonite Church, is working with Rahe on the delegate session social media efforts. He says that social media can expand the church's ability to share transformative stories experienced at convention and can lower multiple, long-standing barriers.

Though delegates represent their congregations and conferences, Jarrett says many individuals and communities are marginalized by being unable to attend conventions due to distance, cost, immigration status, physical limitations and other factors. These nonattenders, he says, are marginalized despite being integral parts of the church.

Jarrett says the chat rooms used at Pittsburgh will help break down other barriers as well. Translation software will allow people both to read and type in multiple languages. He calls the typed chat format, also found on Twitter and Facebook, a "faith gateway" that can allow participation for people who have felt hurt or bullied by the church or who are uncomfortable speaking before groups.

"Generally we hear the majority of investment from the extroverts," Jarrett says. "[Social media] actually balances the power." Jarrett organized similar video streaming and chat sessions for the spring assembly of Atlantic Coast Conference in New York City in April.

Convention planners have expressed hope that congregations, retirement communities and other groups might gather during delegate sessions and hold their own conversations as delegates discern. Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, says there is a possibility that feedback from online delegate table discussions may be shared with delegates present in Pittsburgh.

Delegates will have various online resources to use as they report back to their congregations after Pittsburgh 2011. Convention organizers plan to host a diverse group of bloggers reporting and reflecting on their experience.

The official convention publication, *mPress*, will report news and offer staff member tweets and blogs. Duane Stoltzfus, *mPress* editor and professor of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College, says staffers—which include students—will produce podcasts and videos, including projects that will allow conventiongoers to tell their own stories in their own words.

Twitter and text messaging also will be used to report onsite time and location changes at the convention. Swartzendruber Miller notes that while convention planners initially hoped to make videos of worship sessions available online, they decided to forgo this option because of logistics and limited resources, focusing instead on trying out the technology in connection with the delegate sessions.

Jarrett says the additional social media offered in Pittsburgh will be built using free and inexpensive online technologies and volunteer moderators. He says that outside sources will help pay for the new efforts and that the convention will incur minimal extra cost.—*Ryan Miller for Mennonite Church USA*

How to connect to Pittsburgh 2011

- View general convention-related updates, blogs, links and photos at www.MennoniteUSA.org/convention.
- View delegate-related updates and blogs, watch live video streams and participate in chat sessions through http://pittsburgh2011.digitaldelegate.net/.
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/Pittsburgh2011.
- Twitter: Members write updates in 140 characters or less. Subscribe via computer or cell phone to read text updates from specific users or by following keyword-based hashtags, like #Menno11 for this summer's convention.
- *mPress*: View *mPress* coverage at blog.goshen.edu/mPress.
- Subscribe to *TMail* at www.themennonite.org and receive daily reports; read convention coverage in *The Mennonite*.

Everence volunteers dig in

Some 25 volunteers donate time to Help-a-House program.

Everence volunteers Susie Kauffman, Lisa Gautsche and Brenda Hess work on a project during the May 14 Help-a-House program.

The forecast was wet and chilly, but that didn't slow down the Everence volunteers. The weather held for most of the day and allowed the workers to tear off shingles, replace a roof, shovel dirt, pull weeds, plant flowers and paint some trim.

They donated time to the Help-a-House program coordinated by LaCasa Inc., a community agency in Goshen, Ind., that strengthens neighborhoods through housing and development programs. LaCasa invited local residents and groups to lend a hand to improve low-income homes during the May 14 event.

Everence employees, family members and friends—more than 25 in all—came to help.

"It was an opportunity for my family to spend some time supporting the community," says Kevin Strite, a project manager for Everence. He, his wife and two sons helped install a rain garden, which helps control water runoff. "To see the progress and what was accomplished in the time we were there, with all the other volunteers, was fun and satisfying for all of us," he says.

"Team Everence" sported bright orange T-shirts and joined around 300 other community volunteers who worked on 15 different job sites to fix homes for local families.

Bonnie Long is a laid-off worker who welcomed the repairs that volunteers made at her home. "I'm so incredibly grateful. They don't know what it means to me, and I'm not sure they ever could," she said in an article for *The Goshen News*.

LaCasa organizers were also happy to see the outcomes. "The volunteers are important for successful projects and they truly become neighbors with the people they are helping. This reminds everyone that globally, we are all neighbors," says Kate Irelan, the volunteer coordinator for LaCasa.

> This reminds everyone that globally, we are all neighbors.—Kate Irelan

This belief fits well with how Everence and its employees see their work. Many Everence volunteers participate in community development, fund-raising events and many other civic activities.

At the root of the organization is a belief in caring for one another—and making a contribution to the communities across the country in which Everence serves.

This involvement is in addition to the grants, charitable giving programs and stewardship education that Everence provides to members and communities as part of the faith-based financial and insurance services it offers.—*Everence*

Recipe for disaster:

1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS

Goodville Mutual

New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

MC Canada to consider sexual inclusivity

Leaders will allow Harmony group to introduce motion at July assembly.

While topics regarding sexuality have dominated the mainstream headlines in the past several weeks, Mennonite Church Canada and area church leaders have made a move that points to a shift in values regarding sexuality within the conference.

On May 14, Willard Metzger, MC Canada general secretary, Vic Tiessen, chief operating officer, and Ken Warkentin, executive director of MC Manitoba, met with members of Harmony: Mennonites for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered) Inclusion. The grassroots initiative within MC Canada desires to create open and loving spaces for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in congregations and conference bodies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a motion Harmony plans to present at the MC Canada assembly in Waterloo, Ontario, in early July.

The motion will ask MC Canada to acknowledge that:

- there are nonheterosexual individuals who are struggling within its congregations, whether or not those individuals have publicly acknowledged their orientation and whether or not they are in a relationship with another person; and
- all Christians have a legitimate place in God's kingdom generally and in the church specifically.

The motion also calls on MC Canada to:

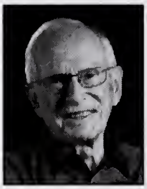
- urge its area churches and congregations to take seriously the call to continue in loving dialogue and to fully embrace—by inviting and welcoming into their midst—all people, including their nonheterosexual members, adherents and neighbors; and
- be encouraged to expedite the present "Being a Faithful Church" process, especially in regard to education and discernment on matters of sexuality.

The timing of this motion is especially important to Harmony, since it was 25 years ago that a motion on sexuality—known as the Saskatoon Resolution—was presented and adopted at a national assembly.

That resolution reads in part: "We understand the Bible to teach that sexual intercourse is reserved for a man and a woman united in marriage and that violation of this teaching is a sin. It is our understanding that this teaching also precludes premarital, extramarital and homosexual sexual activity."

Life Together in the Spirit

-A new book by John Driver, Greencroft Goshen resident



John Driver
Greencroft Goshen Resident

Life Together in the Spirit:
A Radical Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century
John Driver
GOSHEN COLLEGE
Juan Driver
Convivencia radical
Espiritualidad

English and Spanish Editions

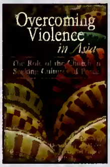
Free copies available at the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2011 in Pittsburgh for both English and Hispanic Church leaders. Visit the Goshen College exhibit/booth for your free copy.

Courtesy of:

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

www.greencroftcommunities.org

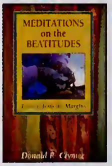
New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC



Overcoming Violence in Asia: The Role of the Church in Seeking Cultures of Peace, ed. Donald Miller et al. "Another example of the contributions the Historic Peace Churches are continuing to make to the ecumenical search for peace." —*Konrad Raiser*
290p $23.95

How Trees Must Feel

How Trees Must Feel, poems by Chris Longenecker, who "surreptitiously, by way of trees, lilies, and socks on the floor, nudges us to lean into life and love." —*Pamela Dintaman* 98p $12.95



Meditations on the Beatitudes: Lessons from The Margins, Don Clymer, who "does a beautiful job of setting up a personal story for each meditation and then reflecting on the beatitude." —*Dorothy Jean Weaver*
84p $12.95

Cascadia
www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

"In the past, the Saskatoon Resolution has been used as a tool to make nonheterosexual people feel excluded," says Ben Borne, a coordinator of Harmony and the incoming student council president at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. "It is certainly outdated, because of the language and the wording used."

He says the Harmony motion is meant to do what the Saskatoon Resolution could not: include nonheterosexuals in the church.

"This is a resolution to call on congregations to embrace their [nonheterosexual] brothers and sisters," says Erwin Warkentin, a member of both Harmony and Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Harmony believes that the Saskatoon Resolution, through its outdated language, has led to a deep struggle with unspoken pain, resulting in silence for individuals, their families and communities and has led to schisms, withdrawals and expulsions of individuals, their families and supporting congregations within MC Canada.

For Borne, being able to meet with senior Mennonite church representatives symbolizes the relationship Harmony hopes to build with the national church.

"It shows that Mennonite Church Canada is interested in what their own members are doing," he says.

According to Metzger, putting forward this motion that would hold the church accountable for "loving dialogue is a message we always need to hear."

Looking ahead, Metzger is prepared for difficult discussions at the conference regarding sexuality.

"The General Board is committed to walk toward difficult conversations, confident that when God's people gather, the Spirit of God is in the midst," he says.

The Harmony motion is scheduled to go through the Resolutions Committee on July 6 at the assembly. It will be given a 20-minute time slot.

The [1996] Saskatoon Resolution has been used as a tool to make nonheterosexual people feel excluded. It is certainly outdated, because of the language and the wording used.—Ben Borne

"That's more time than any other resolution," Tiessen note.—*Rachel Bergen national correspondent for* The Canadian Mennonite. *This article ran in the May 30 issue of* The Canadian Mennonite. *Reprinted with permission.*

Same mission, brand new.

EMM

Going where the church is not... yet.

Experience the new look and feel of
Eastern Mennonite Missions.
Learn more at **www.emm.org/newlogo.**

Eastern Mennonite Missions
717 898-2251 emm.org

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (Sept. 19-28)
A PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE (September 20-30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-11)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct.12-22)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct. 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (Nov.12-21)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)
TOURMAGINATION MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #5DD14322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

CALENDAR

Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, Minn., will celebrate our ***50th Anniversary*** on Sept. 23-25, 2011, with a theme of On the Banks of the River: 50 years of invitation to the Water of Life (Jeremiah 17:7-8). Join us for a weekend of stories, music, food, renewing old friendships and celebration of God's faithfulness. Contact us at anniversary@faithmennonite.org or check out details at www.faithmennonite.org.

WORKERS

Baker, Michael T., was licensed as pastor of youth and young adults at Community Mennonite Fellowship, Milton, Pa., on March 9.

OBITUARIES

Arn, Sarah Eleanor Kratz, 71, Lansdale, Pa., died May 10 of cancer. Spouse: John W. Arn. Parents: Horace Spare Kratz and Sarah Eleanor Wampole Kratz. Children: Christel Boysel, Kendra Hosgood, Nathan; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 14 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale.

Bechtel, Irene Souder, 99, Spring City, Pa., died March 6. Spouse: Norman Huber Bechtel (deceased). Parents: Edwin and Ella Souder Hackman. Children: Geraldine Stiedle, Eleanor Fuhrman, Lois Shank Gerber, Lorraine Sayre, Doris Schmehl, Harold, Wilmer, Dorothea Ray; 24 grandchildren; 54 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City.

Disbrow, Caleb D., 96, Archbold, Ohio, died May 19. Spouse: Estella Grieser Disbrow (deceased). Parents: Ernest and Floy Johnson Disbrow. Children: Elizabeth Uphoff, Kenneth, Shirley Stuckey, Ernest; 19 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren. May 21 at Fairlawn Haven Chapel, Archbold.

Dutcher, Gertrude Lydia Maust, 86, Hartville, Ohio, died May 19. Spouse: Frank Dutcher (deceased). Parents: Earl and Idella Maust. Children: Jonathan, Ruth Massey, Dan, Naomi Leaman, Titus; 17 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Godshalk, Earl H., 84, Blooming Glen, Pa., died May 21. Spouse: Ruth D. Mitman Godshalk. Parents: Horace and Elsie Hockman Godshalk. Children: Beth Ponzio, E. Brent; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 25 at Doylestown Mennonite Church, Doylestown, Pa.

Griffin, John W., Sr., 86, Denver, Colo., died April 26. Spouse: Jan Griffin. Spouse: Elsie Griffin (deceased). Children: Rochelle Griffin, John Jr.; three grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Hershberger, Grace L. Gongwer, 84, Goshen, Ind., died May 2. Spouse: LeRoy Hershberger. Parents: Maurice and Olive Stauffer Gongwer. Children: Cheryl Hershberger, Donna Skiles, Dawn Moneyheffer, Jerry; five grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Hertzler, Russel Henry, 90, Dillsburg, Pa., died April 19. Spouse: Agnes P. Bupp Hertzler. Parents: Henry Christian and Annie Elizabeth Harbold Hertzler. Children: Lois Diller, Russel Jr., Evelyn Miller; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 25 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Camp Hill, Pa.

Hieser, Vernon J., 100, Foosland, Ill., died May 28. Spouse: Margaret Ulrich Hieser (deceased). Parents: John E. and Mary E. Cender Hieser. Children: Kenneth, Judith A. Hershberger, Sharon J. Hieser, Sally S. Gaff; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Janzen, Pearl Mierau, 87, Reedley, Calif., died May 16. Spouse: Victor Janzen (deceased). Parents: John and Lydia Friesen Mierau. Children: Michael, Christina Moyer, Mark, Carolyn Janzen; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 21 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Kenagy, Clifford "Ralph," 89, Albany, Ore., died March 29. Spouse: Lois Yake Kenagy. Parents: Urie Emmet and Bertha Neuschwander Kenagy. Children: Susan Kenagy Schaefer, Peter, Marguerite Kenagy, Eric Yake Kenagy; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Klaassen, Donna L. Regier, 86, North Newton, Kan., died May 8. Spouse: Melvin Klaassen. Parents: A.J. and Suzanne Bargen Regier. Children: Linda Harms, Chuck, K. John, Ellen Byergo; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Kraus, Mildred Inez Brunk, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 8. Spouse: Dr. Harry Lee Kraus Sr. Parents: Joseph A. and Hannah L. Brunk. Children: Harry Jr., Donna Parrish, Debra Snyder; nine grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Leatherman, Willard "Bill" D., 92, Hatfield, Pa., died May 19. Spouse: Alma Moyer Leatherman (deceased). Parents: David G. and Martha D. Leatherman. Children: Janet Yoder, Ray, Darlene Brandis; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 24 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Lehman, Oleta Miller, 93, Kidron, Ohio, died May 12. Spouse: Marvin Lehman (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Barbara Miller. Children: Joann Erb, John; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Miley, Guy, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 8. Spouse: Christine Heatwole Miley. Parents: Walter and Effie Vance Miley. Step-children: Wayne Eugene Heatwole, Gary Wilson Heatwole; five step-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at McMullen Funeral Home Chapel, Harrisonburg.

Miller, Durward "Butch" Henry, 76, Pigeon, Mich., died May 1. Spouse: Nova Jean Wertz Miller. Parents: Orval and Marjorie Pletcher Miller. Children: Margie Clement, Sheldon, Darlene Hoffman; seven grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Miller, Rachel M. Keim, 90, Goshen, Ind., died April 25 following a two-month illness. Spouse: Dwight Miller (deceased). Parents: Menno and Libbie Rhinesmith Keim. Children: David, Karen Higginbotham, Kathy White, Curtis; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Ruth Kathryn Mishler, 93, Shipshewana, Ind., died April 4. Spouse: Ernest Miller. Parents: Homer and Lydia Miller Mishler. Children: Dewayne J., Gerald Keith, Jennifer Kay Miller, Franklin J., Ralph Edward, Dennis Kalb; eight grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Moyer, Joseph N., 89, Souderton, Pa., died May 27. Spouse: Eva Souder Moyer. Parents: William and Valeria Mood Moyer. Children: Glenda Bergey, Neal J.; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 31 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Noll, Lois Arlene Hershey, 82, Lancaster, Pa., died March 31 from complications of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Kenneth B. Noll. Parents: D. Paul and Sue B. Snyder Hershey. Children: Jeanette Bontrager, Herb; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Nussbaum, Willis, 88, Dalton, Ohio, died March 21. Spouse: Edna Nussbaum (deceased). Spouse: Elrena Lehman Nussbaum (deceased). Parents: Eli and Hulda Nussbaum. Children: Elton, Arvilla Kaufman, Arden; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Step-children: Virgene Lehman, Karen Garnett, Curt Lehman, Darrel Lehman, Craig Lehman, Lori Napolitan, Joyce Weaver; 10 step-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Peachey, Sue E. Yoder, 97, Goshen, Ind., died May 14. Spouse: Jacob J. Peachey (deceased). Parents: Christian B. and Fannie Kauffman Yoder. Child: Chester R.; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 16 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen, Ind., and May 18 at Henderson Funeral Home in Belleville, Pa.

Herald Press

Mennonite girls can Cook

Mennonite Girls Can Cook
Lovella Schellenberg, Anneliese Friesen, Judy Wiebe, Betty Reimer, Bev Klassen, Charlotte Penner, Ellen Bayles, Julie Klassen, Kathy McLellan, Marg Bartel

Three years ago, Lovella Schellenberg started a blog to record her thoughts, memories and recipes from her Mennonite heritage. It proved so popular that she invited other women to join her. The result: The blog *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*.

Now the popular blog—over 1.6 million visits since 2008—is also a beautiful book that celebrates hospitality, blessing, sharing, friendship and good food.

Royalties will go to charity to feed hungry children.

$24.99 USD/$28.99 CAD
www.mennonitegirlscancook.net

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of MennoMedia

Everence

"We've had a health plan with Mennonite Mutual Aid Association (now Everence) since 1971. We feel good that we're supporting other Anabaptists."

Howard Schmitt, pastor
Plain City, Ohio

Join a unique group of people who share your beliefs – and your medical expenses – with health coverage from Everence. To find out more, go to www.everence.com or call (800) 348-7468 ext. 2460.

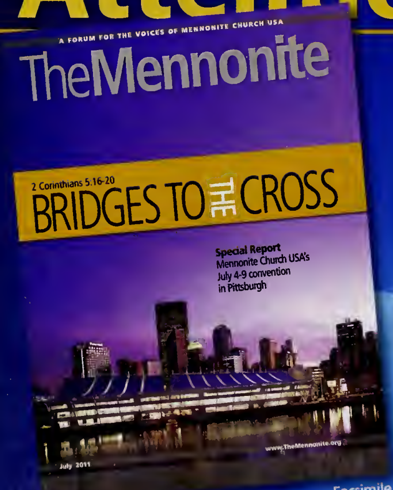
Core market manager

Everence (formerly MMA) is seeking a core market manager to provide leadership of all Everence activities within the Newton, Kan., area market. Responsible for developing the market so individuals and organizations have the opportunity to integrate their faith with their financial decisions. Qualified candidates will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent experience (MBA preferred); proven management experience, preferably in delivery of financial services; proven negotiation skills; and significant sales and distribution experience.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; e-mail: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Attention pastors



A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
2 Corinthians 5:16-20
BRIDGES TO THE CROSS
Special Report
Mennonite Church USA's
July 4-9 convention
in Pittsburgh
July 2011

Facsimile

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* **Pittsburgh 2011** issue available

Everyone in your congregation can read about the happenings at **Pittsburgh 2011** even if they don't receive *The Mennonite*.

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at **800-790-2498** or **Subscriptions@themennonite.org** to place your order. We will send your order in bulk at $2 per copy ($3 Cnd). Your order and payment **must be received by July 15.** No invoice will be issued at this low price. Send payment to *The Mennonite*, 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

TheMennonite

Preheim, Curtis E., 86, Freeman, S.D., died May 13. Spouse: Ruth Regier Preheim. Parents: Emil and Frances P. Waltner Preheim. Children: Charlene Friesen, Tyrone, Arlan, Donna Beier, Jane Mahoney; 17 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Rodgers, Hugh M., 97, Perkasie, Pa., died May 1. Spouse: Hildegard Holb Rodgers. Spouse: Margaret Yoder Crowthers Rodgers (deceased). Children: Ronald Rodgers, Ralph Rodgers, Karl Kimball, Marianne Seastrand, Robert Rodgers; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at Anders Detweiler Funeral Home, Souderton, Pa.

Schell, James R., 67, Alliance, Ohio, died May 29 of cancer. Spouse: Marilyn Conrad Schell. Parents: Howard and Arlene Bourquin Schell. Children: Laura Wilson, Christine Schell, Shannon Aguero, James, Brian; eight grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Schlabaugh, Gordon Dean, 76, Wellman, Iowa, died May 17. Spouse: Lois Horrisberger Schlabaugh. Parents: Sam and Nettie Yoder Schlabaugh. Children: Daryl, Lee, Jim, Neil; five grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Schlegel, Benjamin T., 92, Coplay, Pa., died May 18. Spouse: Evelyn M. Heffelfinger Schlegel. Parents: Harvey C. and Stella M. Heintzelman Schlegel. Children: Carol Buss, Althea Muffley-Bond, Christine Schlegel-Metz, Benjamin T. Jr., Roy, David; 20 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Schisler Funeral Home, Inc., Northampton, Pa.

Schmucker, Mildred Mary Sommers, 91, Louisville, Ohio, died April 29. Spouse: Elden J. Smucker (deceased). Parents: John and Bertha Taylor Sommers. Children: Ruth Anne Bontreger, Marcia Miller, Eunice Miller, Elva Block; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 4 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Schrock, Dorothy Gerber, 90, Dalton, Ohio, died May 10. Spouse: David Schrock (deceased). Parents: Grover and Fairy Gerber. Children: Robert, Leah Bishop, Rita Sutter, Judy Miller, Hannah Gehman; 16 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: May 13 at Smithville Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Showalter, Gerald W., 74, Newport News, Va., died March 29. Spouse: Evonne Shank Showalter. Parents: Oliver and Frances Miller Showalter. Children: June Hartzler, Joann Morgan, Joyce Brunk, Jonathan; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren. Memorial service: April 2 at Huntington Mennonite Church, Newport News.

Smith, Nancy M. Roth, 74, Wauseon, Ohio, died May 24. Spouse: John Smith. Parents: Reuben and Norma Switzer Roth. Children: Steve, Kirby, Penny Shultz, Jim, Kamal, Kathy Smith, Carl; 16 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Steiner, Lucille Zuercher, 94, Kidron, Ohio, died April 1. Spouse: Phares Steiner (deceased). Parents: Christian and Anna Lehman Zuercher. Step-children: Margaret Gerber, Wilford, LaVerne, Mahlon; 15 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; 16 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 4 at Kidron Mennonite.

Weaver, Jean Wenger, 83, Waynesboro, Va., died May 4. Spouse: Marion Weaver. Parents: Henry S. and Amy Heatwole Wenger. Children: Maynard, Sidney; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Yoder, Wilma Cordelle Brenneman, 91, Wellman, Iowa, died April 20. Spouse: Pete M. Yoder. Parents: Erlis and Martha Marner Brenneman. Children: Mary Wenman, Marvin, Dona Kasper; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Make a difference in the world.

Study Public Health at Bluffton University.

Classes begin fall of 2011.

bluffton.edu/publichealth

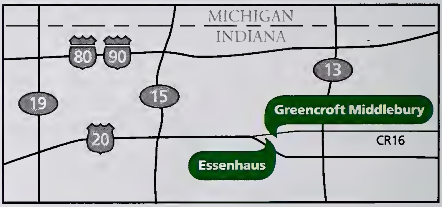
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
CR16
20
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

H	O	R	S	E	S	■	E	O	R	T	Y
U	■	I	■	■	E	■	I	■	A	■	■
N	T	N	E	■	V	I	R	G	I	N	S
O	■	G	■	T	E	N	S	■	N	■	T
R	T	S	E	■	N	A	T	T	O	N	S
E	■	■	E	■	■	G	■	■	N	■	T
O	O	V	E	S	■	R	■	■	T	■	E
■	N	■	V	■	■	E	S	T	H	E	R
S	E	V	E	N	■	E	■	■	E	■	■
E	■	■	N	O	■	M	Y	S	E	L	E
C	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	■	A	■	E
O	■	C	A	E	E	N	O	A	R	■	O
N	■	I	■	■	■	T	■	■	I	■	O
O	E	S	E	R	T	■	E	P	H	O	O

Managing Director

Everence Financial (formerly MMA), a company on the cutting edge of faith-connected financial services, has a job opportunity for a premier leadership position. The Managing Director in the Michiana market leads a team of 25 highly-dedicated financial professionals who provide services ranging from personal financial planning, to employee benefits, to banking, wealth management, and charitable advising. The Michiana market is home to the corporate headquarters of Everence.

The individual hired for this key role will have significant sales experience; been highly successful in previous sales work (preferably in financial services or banking); exhibit a highly interactive, participatory, management style and place a high value on relationships; will be a player-coach bringing revenue to the team through personal sales activity. This individual will be very articulate about the connection between Christian faith and financial decisions. A bachelor's degree, strong understanding of Anabaptist faith communities and respect for Anabaptist values are required.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; email: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

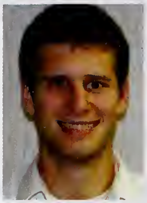
Urgent openings: **Mennonite Central Committee** is seeking dynamic leaders to be ***MCC's representatives*** for its programs in Sudan based in Juba, South Sudan and Bangladesh, based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Representatives manage programs and projects, lead a diverse team, oversee reporting and provide overall leadership to MCC's entire program in the country. Job descriptions are available at www.mcc.org/serve. Send resumé and letter of interest to: Becky Ream at: rsr@mcc.org or MCC Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, or call 717-859-1151.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for a ***half-time position of program development and marketing associate*** at EMU in Lancaster, Pa. The candidate will oversee the research, development and implementation of nontraditional, cutting-edge, undergraduate program opportunities for traditional age college students consistent with the larger mission and vision of the university. Must be passionate about EMU at Lancaster's unique identity. S/he collaborates with EMU marketing department to implement social and traditional media strategies that position EMU at Lancaster effectively with key audiences. S/he serves as the liaison for the EMU at Lancaster programs to main campus advancement division. Must have strong interpersonal communication skills, ability to set priorities and to work for more than one person or department, knowledge of and skills in educational program development, experience in marketing and promotion and strong oral and written communication skills. Submit application, resumé and three references to: hr@emu.edu. For more information visit our website at www.emu.edu/humanresources. People who bring diversity are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School has the following positions available for the 2011-12 school year: ***Spanish teacher, food services director, campus pastor*** and sabbatical fill-ins for ***learning support, English and science***. Contact Principal Dr. Conrad Swartzentruber at 215-362-2675 or send a resumé to cjswartzentruber@dockhs.org. Go to www.dockhs.org and click on the "Employment" tab for more information and an application.

Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning, N.Y., is seeking a long-term ***pastor***. We are part of New York Mennonite Conference. If you are interested, please send your Ministerial Leadership Information form to Dan Gallagher or contact him at DG.CorningNY@gmail.com.

Our good idols



Thomas Dunn is associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

In January 2010, I read my first book by Timothy Keller. Since that time, I have become a huge fan, reading his books and blogs and listening to his sermons online. Keller is the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, which is having a significant impact there and around the world through its many church planting initiatives. In his book *Counterfeit Gods*, Keller discusses the pervasive sin of idolatry. Even though it's been close to a year since I read this book, the ideas are still percolating in me.

The most significant takeaway from this book is the idea that idols are good things. That's right; the vast majority of the idols in our lives are good things. For me to understand this, I first needed to understand what an idol is. I had always dismissed the passages in the Bible about idolatry because I don't have any shiny things I bow down to in my home. I am a monotheist and never struggled with polytheism. With this understanding, I never thought much about idolatry and certainly didn't see myself as being idolatrous. This is because my definition of idolatry was lacking. An idol is anything we elevate above God in our lives, and most things that we elevate above God in our lives are good things.

An idol is anything we elevate above God in our lives, and most things that we elevate above God in our lives are good things.

We quickly want to jump to the "evil" things that "bad" people do to replace God in their lives. We talk about lost individuals, people groups or generations that look to drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling or false religions in the absence of God in their lives. As true and as sad as this reality may be, this is not the type of idolatry most Mennonite readers struggle with. There are many good things that can play the same idolatrous role in our lives.

The list of good idols in our lives is endless: family, friends, success, education, financial stability, spouse, children, grandchildren, acceptance, good grades, athletic achievement, entertainment, food, hobbies. As you can see, all these things are good, and I am certainly not proposing that we attempt to eradicate them from our lives. What I am saying is that all these things (and more) have the potential to become the ultimate reality of our lives, thus making them idols in place of God himself.

To take it a step further, we can look at Mennonite Church USA and ask: What have become idols for us? What are the things we are tempted to elevate above Jesus Christ? Have we elevated our peace and justice stance above Jesus himself? Have we made denominational unity a false god? Have we emphasized our Mennonite distinctives to the point of idolatry? Have we held up our history and tradition to a point where it is more important than the Good News of Jesus Christ? Have we declared creation care more important than the Creator? Have we bowed to the gods of politics and power? Have we succumbed to the almighty dollar? Have we become idolatrous?

The easy answer is yes; we are all in our hearts idolaters. To keep our hearts turned toward God above all other things is a daily struggle for all of us. It is important to realize this because idolatry is such an insidious sin. It can creep into and become deeply seeded in our hearts while we remain oblivious to it. We comfort ourselves by saying, "I'm not bowing down to any little golden idols." We are all prone to wander, but thanks be to God we are not left to wander on our own. We have such a high priest in Jesus Christ, who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). TM

FILM REVIEW

Super 8 (PG-13) combines the elements of a coming-of-age story with the suspense of a monster movie but is really about making movies. Set in 1979, it follows four 12-year-old boys (and a 14-year-old girl) as they make a zombie movie using a Super 8 camera. While they're filming, a train wreck brings the U.S. Air Force to their small town to search for an escaped alien. The story is affecting, and the young actors are excellent. The story of their relationships is more engaging than the monster plot, which ultimately is predictable.—*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS

Worship & Mission
AFTER CHRISTENDOM

Worship and Mission After Christendom by Alan Kreider and Eleanor Kreider (Herald Press, 2011, $19.99) argues that while Christendom, which combines church and state, separated worship and mission, the two must be combined. Drawing on studies of mission, liturgy, Christian history, the Bible and the experience of the global church, the Kreiders call on us to integrate worship and mission with all of life, to encounter God and let "God's character and purposes shape us."—*gh*

NONRESISTANCE
JUSTICE

Nonresistance to Justice; the Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric 1908-2008 by Ervin Stutzman (Herald Press, 2011, $39.99) is neither a history lesson nor a theological treatise. Trained as a rhetorician, Stutzman examines the rhetoric in official church statements and what writers in *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* have said about pacifism over 100 years. After charting the shift from "quiet-in-the-land" nonresistance to nonviolent peace activism for justice, Stutzman concludes with a call for Mennonites to extend grace to our enemies, just as God has extended grace to us.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Freedom Riders remind us of racism

How quickly we forget our nation's experience around racism! A good reminder of where we've been and the price many have paid along the way appeared on TV in May.

"Freedom Riders," shown on PBS stations and available at pbs.org, is a powerful film that recounts the experiences of courageous men and women who risked their lives for simply traveling together on buses and trains as they journeyed through the Deep South in 1961.

From May until November that year, more than 400 black and white Americans rode on buses and trains, deliberately violating Jim Crow laws. These Freedom Riders—a name they gave themselves—met with bitter racism and mob violence along the way, yet remained committed to their belief in nonviolent activism.

The two-hour documentary is based on Raymond Arsenault's book *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. The film includes interviews with many of the riders, plus others involved in the events, including John Patterson, governor of Alabama at the time, and John Seigenthaler, an assistant to Robert F. Kennedy, attorney general at the time.

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized the rides, which occurred after the U.S. Supreme Court had mandated the desegregation of interstate travel facilities.

The newly inaugurated Kennedy administration was focused on the Cold War at the time and tried to ignore civil rights issues. Headlines about the mob violence against the riders appeared in Europe, where Kennedy was traveling on his way to meet with Kruschev, the Soviet premier. These events forced Kennedy to address the problem.

Klansmen in Alabama set fire to the original Freedom Ride bus, which only inspired others to get on another bus. In Montgomery, Ala., a mob attacked the riders when they—black and white—got off to use segregated restrooms or eat together. Meanwhile, the police looked on and waited to intervene until some riders were beaten so bad they had to be rushed to the hospital. Then the police arrested the riders, not those committing the violence.

Kennedy chided the governor, urging him to act in protecting the riders. On camera, Patterson told the interviewer that he told his secretary to tell Kennedy he wasn't available.

Eventually, Alabama authorities escorted the riders' buses to the Mississippi state line. Mississippi officials used the tactic of locking up the riders and sending them to the notorious Parchman State Penitentiary.

Instead of discouraging the movement, more riders traveled to Jackson, Miss., to be arrested. Their tactic was to fill the prison with their numbers. More than 300 were arrested. The movement made front-page news across the country, and eventually they were set free.

Watching this powerful documentary left me with several impressions. An obvious one is the courage of the freedom riders and their commitment to nonviolent resistance to injustice. I asked myself, Am I willing to stand up as courageously against injustice?

Another impression, also obvious, was how blatantly racist many practices, if not laws, were then. How could those people react so violently to people simply riding a bus together or wanting to eat together at the same table? The answer is fear. They feared the loss of their privilege.

This raised a further question to me: What racist practices am I upholding, afraid to lose my privileges as a white person? TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Mary L. Beck, Archbold, Ohio
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Beth Bontrager, Goshen, Ind.
Phil Bontrager, Berrien Springs, Mich.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Miriam Cochran, Hollsopple, Pa.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
John & Anna Gehman, Apple Creek, Ohio
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Richard Heisey, Winchester, Va.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Marian Hollinger, New Holland, Pa.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Ethel Kolb, Myerstown Rd, Pa.
Stephen Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Alice Lapp, Akron, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Frances Mast, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Erma Maust, Sarasota, Fla.
Crist Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Carl & Ella Peters, Henderson, Neb.
Howard Piggee, Fredericksburg, Va.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Esther Sauder, Wauseon, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Edith Schrock, Lancaster, Pa.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Alice B. Souder, Grottoes, Va.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Greg & Amy Troyer, Lancaster, Pa.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Sheryl Weaver, Hartville, Ohio
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Joyce E. Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

RESOURCES

Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Christian Formation by Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling (BakerAcademic, 2011, $24.99) uses social science, ethics, biblical studies and hermeneutics to present a cohesive vision of human wholeness and spiritual holiness.

The Limits of Perfection: Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science by Noreen Herzeld, edited by Carl S. Helrich (Pandora Press, 2011, $18), addresses the questions, What is perfection? and, Can we attain it?

Sunday, Sabbath and the Weekend, edited by Edward O'Flaherty and Rodney L. Petersen (Eerdmans, 2010, $16), includes essays by 14 contributors from diverse traditions across the spectrum of American Christianity that examine how Christians and others can find needful rest through Sunday and Sabbath in managing the pressures of our 24/7 global culture.

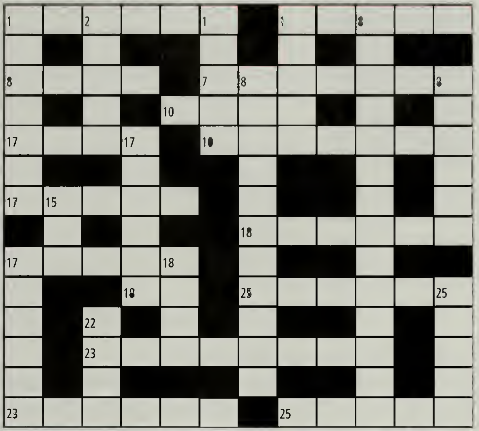
A Lever and Place to Stand: The Contemplative Stance, the Active Prayer by Richard Rohr (Paulist Press, 2011, $15) offers a critique of religion that often creates an alternative pious world without really challenging oppression, materialism and sectarianism in our modern world.

Year of Plenty: One Suburban Family, Four Rules and 365 Days of Homegrown Adventure in Pursuit of Christian Living by Craig L. Goodwin (Augsburg Fortress, 2011, $12.95) describes a family's year-long experiment to consume only what was local, used, homegrown or homemade.

Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor by Ben Witherington III (Eerdmans, 2011, $18) considers work as neither a curse nor the cure of human life but rather as something good that God has given us to do.

What's that number?

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. Solomon had 12 thousand of these animals.
4. "The Israelites ate manna ___ years, until they came to a land that was settled …" (Ex. 16:35)
6. The number of virtues listed as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23
7. Ten of these went with their lamps to meet the bridegroom.
10. "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ___ of thousands." (I Sam. 18)
11. "On the third day he will ___ again." (Lk. 18).
13. The Lord told Rebekah, "Two ___ are in your womb …"
14. Two of these birds or two pigeons were to be sacrificed when Jesus was presented to the Lord. (Lk. 2)
16. Before this young woman became queen, she had to go through 12 months of beauty treatments.
17. Number of demons Jesus drove out of Mary Magdalene (Lk. 8:2)
19. Did Adam only have three children? Yes or No.
20. "And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for ___ seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'" (Rom. 11:4)
23. The Hebrew one began in spring and contained the months of Abib, Ziv, Ethanim, and Bul; later a 12-month Babylonian one was adopted.
24. Jesus spent 40 days of temptation here.
25. This priestly vest had two onyx stones with the 12 tribes engraved upon them. (Ex. 28)

DOWN

1. "Abraham was a ___ years old when his son Isaac was born to him."
2. The Ark of the Covenant had four gold ___ fastened to its feet, two on each side.
3. In Revelation, John refers to the ___ churches of Asia.
4. "I am the ___ and the Last."
5. "… I will send ___ ___ ___ ___ for 40 days and 40 nights …" (4 words)(Gen. 7:4)
8. "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are __ ____." (two words) (1 Jn. 5:7-8)
9. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and all the brothers had only one of these, named Dinah. (singular)
12. The number of goat-hair curtains made for the tabernacle (Ex. 26)
15. "Now the whole world had __ language and a common speech."
17. "God called the expanse 'sky." And there was evening and there was morning – the ___ day."
18. "The First ___, the angels did say …"
21. This happened when Noah was 600 years old, on the 17th day of the second month.
22. This book of the Bible spans approximately 32 years, from the ascension of Christ to Paul's imprisonment.

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our September 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

August 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the puzzle can be found on page 57.

(Continued from page 4)
hopes for the church on false premises, such as the unrealistic beliefs that others will change to be like us."

Imagine my consternation, then, upon reading in the same issue that Brother Stutzman fired Randall Spaulding, a proven, gifted and dedicated servant of the church, from whose hymnal supplements we sing practically every Sunday morning. The only reason given for throwing Randall under the bus is that he will not change to become like Ervin in his sexual orientation. Apparently Brother Randall was more than Brother Ervin could "put up with." —*Melvin D. Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

I read the May issue, as I always do, with interest and expectation. I was struck by the comments of the executive director on page 63, where he wrote that he would "not give a nickel for church unity based solely on common bloodlines. …" I agree. However, on page 48 of the same issue, he rejects the gifts of a talented, committed man simply because he loves another man. I guess if the executive director won't "give a nickel" for a partially inclusive church, I'll offer a dollar for one that is fully inclusive of all Anabaptist believers.—*Lonnie Buerge, Kansas City, Mo.*

Supports Spaulding dismissal

In response to Rebecca Sommers' letter in the June issue, I suggest that her rationale for supporting "those of a different sexual orientation" is actually dangerous. Given her assumption that the Mennonite Church USA position must change because we are on the "wrong side of history," then we must also assume that our position on biblical pacifism must change. It's obvious from the rest of Christianity that we are probably on the wrong side of history when it comes to our peace position.

My belief is that as long as we hold to that basic Anabaptist tenet of being "people of the Book," then we will frequently be countercultural—even when the culture we are speaking of is another Christian group. I hope we never let the surrounding culture determine what we believe but always follow the words and actions of Jesus. He called sin for what it was but gave us a wonderful example of how to react to it when he spoke to the woman caught in adultery: "Go and sin no more."

As a church, we are called to confront sin and then offer God's amazing grace so that everyone can experience freedom from sin. It is for that reason that I support the decision of the Mennonite Church USA executive leadership to dismiss Randall Spaulding from the Binational Worship Council.—*Nelson Shenk, Bally, Pa.*

Mennonites pay for war

Today's estimates of our military budget vary between 48 to 59 percent of total federal expenditures. The latter figure includes Department of Defense, War, Veterans Affairs and Nuclear Weapons Programs. The Pentagon seems committed to destroying other people's countries in order to allow our rich multinational corporations to steal their natural resources.

So how much money do we give our government to support our wars? To find out, go to www.rethink-afghanistan.com and click on "How much did you pay for war this year?"

If one's taxable income is $10,000, (married, filing jointly), you pay $274 a year for war; if it's $25,000, it's $798 per year; at $50,000, it's $1,826 per year and at $100,000, you pay $4,757 per year for war. For the categories single, married filing separately and head of household, the war tax bite is larger.

If your congregation has 50 people with taxable incomes of $50,000 that means your congregation sends our government $91,300 per year to use for wars of aggression.

If one adds up the taxable income of every Mennonite in the land, how much is the Mennonite church contributing to destroying other countries for the benefit of our corporations? Is this really what we want to do with our wealth, the wealth of "Die Stille im Lande," the capital of Anabaptists, the sweat of the brow of the meek and the nonviolent peacemakers?—*Daniel Riehl, Lititz, Pa.*

Gets choked up, too

I spent a week with my mother. It was only a little over a week after we lost Daddy (see page 52). I was reading the article "Song Weepers" by Lisa Schmucker Showalter (May). I agree that when you hear a song you relate it to something in your life. At Daddy's funeral, we sang his favorite song, the beautiful "Wonderful Grace of Jesus." I got choked up and could not sing. However I listened to the congregation singing it, and it was beautiful.

Daddy was Russel Henry Hertzler, 90 years old, of Dillsburg, Pa. He was a life member of Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Camp Hill, Pa. I often enjoyed your magazine when visiting with my parents.—*Evelyn Hertzler Miller, Anderson, S.C.*

Subscript, not superscript

It's just a style thing, but it bugs the chemistry teacher in me. When the chemical formula for carbon dioxide is abbreviated, and appropriately so, as cee-oh-two, the two must be a subscript and not a superscript, as in the May issue ("Why Are Gas Prices So Low?"). Please, and thanks.—*E. Elaine Kauffman, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

Thanks for MPH story

Thank you for your contribution to all of us through your honest but sensitive article and editorial about Mennonite Publishing House (June). You obviously put a lot of work and thought into them.

Many people are going to say, "I finally get it." That even happened for me—someone who worked in the old MPH and now is with the new incarnation. People ask me questions about what happened. Now I can respond more intelligently.—*Steve Shenk, director of marketing and sales, Mennonite Publishing Network, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Investing in hope Desolation and consolation

On [God] we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers…
—2 Corinthians 1:10b-11a (TNIV)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians following a time of considerable frustration, disappointment and deep peril. He testified to being under such severe stress, far beyond his ability to endure, so that he despaired of life itself (2 Corinthians 1:8). I'm quite sure the Corinthian church's ambivalence about Paul's apostleship was one of the factors that drove him to despair.

But at the time of this writing, Paul had experienced a time of great comfort. Apparently a report from Titus about the Corinthian church brought Paul a deep sense of God's comfort (2 Corinthians 7:6-7). On another occasion, after desperately pleading for God to remove a "thorn" in his flesh, Paul received the consolation that God's grace was sufficient for him (12:9).

It seems that Paul, like many of us, experienced times of desolation as well as consolation, sometimes in response to social situations. "Desolation" and "consolation" are words used by St. Ignatius of Loyola to describe such experiences. This seems abundantly clear as I read the stories of the Israelite people. The Psalms express such times in the life of the Hebrew people. For several examples, see Psalms 10:1; 13:1-2; 22:1-2; 88:1-18; 130:1-4. These are prayers of people whose hope has waned, yet they cry out to God for help. They ring true of groups as well as individuals.

I notice that many of the laments in the Psalms are followed by a declaration of expectant hope or confident trust. See, for example Psalms 10:14; 13:5-6, 22:23-24 and 130:5-6, the same Psalms that begin with a sense of despair. Again, the writer of Lamentations 3:1-21 blames God for deep difficulty yet comes back to praise God for mercies that are new every morning (v. 22).

Although the Psalms were written by and for the Hebrew people, the Christian church has adopted them. Jesus was intimately familiar with the Psalms. He often referred to them. I believe he understands what it means to feel distanced and forsaken by God, particularly as he experienced it during his crucifixion, quoting Psalm 22.

I find it helpful to meditate on the Psalms. They help me notice the movements in my own soul from desolation to consolation. As I travel across Mennonite Church USA, I find that just like the Apostle Paul and the ancient Hebrew people, individuals and congregations experience times of desolation and consolation.

In times of desolation, our life may lose its sense of cohesion. Congregational attendance may languish. The worship may turn dull and insipid. Members may find themselves in intractable conflict. The church may lose its sense of purpose and direction, with people just "going through the motions."

Yet there are times of great consolation, times of renewal when the same group has a palpable sense of God's presence. People work together in unity of heart and mind.

At times when I turn my eye toward the internal divisions and troubles in our church, I identify with Paul in his interaction with the Corinthians. I feel a sense of desolation, and hope seems to slip away. Yet when I fix my eyes on all that God is doing in the world and in our church, my hope is renewed. At times I am moved to tears, a sign for me of God's presence and power. I am confident that God is at work in Mennonite Church USA, far beyond my awareness or imagination.

As Paul told the Corinthians, turning to God in the midst of stress and trouble is an investment in hope. Praying for others who feel despair is also an investment in hope. By God's grace, I will practice both of these disciplines and invite others in our beloved church to do the same. TM

At times when I turn my eye toward the internal divisions and troubles in our church, I identify with Paul in his interaction with the Corinthians.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA

#####################################CAR-RT LOT##C059
134561 939 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P70
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 939
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

The Pittsburgh experiment

Everett J. Thomas

Ten years ago to the month, delegates at Nashville 2001 voted to create Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The 2001 delegate workbook offered an audacious look at the future of our new national church body. According to the document, "Imagining the Future: 2001 to 2011," this is some of what 2011 was *supposed* to look like:

- 75 percent of congregations are active in urban mission partnerships, and more than 2,000 people are participating in a year of service;
- the 2011 assembly celebrates partnerships with 10 other national Mennonite church bodies;
- enrollment of Mennonite students in Mennonite seminaries has doubled since 2001;
- the Ecumenical Stewardship Center reports that Mennonites top its giving chart for the first time;
- a newly created Mennonite Peace Center plays a key role in the passage of peace tax fund legislation that pays for peace instead of war;
- Mennonite artists and musicians complete a new, illustrated electronic hymnal;
- a new merger process begins with the goal of Mennonite Church USA joining some related Anabaptist groups.

If delegates approve the 'Pittsburgh Experiment,' they will establish goals and priorities for the next biennium through a different process.

What happened?

I don't recognize any of these characteristics in the Mennonite Church USA of 2011. Why did we so completely miss the mark set for ourselves? If we believe God's Spirit moves in the midst of the gathered church—even when doing business in a delegate session—how could this happen?

I see many reasons; some may consider them excuses:

1. Much of the language in 2001 was about what we were going to do for God in the next 10 years. But since that time, we have come to understand that being a missional church is not about what we can do. It is about what God is already doing and then discerning how we can join in God's work.
2. Two months after the vote to form Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, the U.S. church was traumatized by 9/11. We found it more important to think about Islam and unforeseen U.S. wars in Muslim countries.
3. The Great Recession required retrenching and reordering priorities for many church institutions that just wanted to survive.
4. A 2008 attempt by the Executive Board to create a "one board" model diverted institutional and leadership time and money that could have been directed toward some of those 2001 goals.
5. The primary way we've done business in delegate sessions has required delegates to respond to what leaders have brought to them rather than discerning direction together as a spiritual community.

This last reason may be something Mennonite Church USA can address. If delegates approve a proposal called the "Pittsburgh Experiment" during this summer's convention, they will establish goals and priorities for the next biennium through a different process. Instead of delegates debating resolutions, leaders want a new process that can generate a purposeful plan. In the Pittsburgh Experiment, such a process would focus on listening for the Holy Spirit, praying, listening to each other and discerning how the church should respond to God's love and care for us and the world.

If the process generates new goals for the next 10 years, realization of those goals will confirm that such discernment put us in touch with what God is doing already.—*ejt*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02002687 9

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN

Pittsbu
AMBS

Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011

be the BRIDGE

August 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- Youth build bridges
- Fernando feeds Mennonite multitudes
- My ancestors were illegal immigrants
- Can boring be good?
- Three bridges from Pittsburgh 2011

INTRODUCING

MennoMedia

Creators of faith-based print, video, radio and web materials for Mennonites and people everywhere.

Ideas for living out your faith from an Anabaptist perspective.

THROUGH OUR WELL-KNOWN BRANDS

Herald Press
books

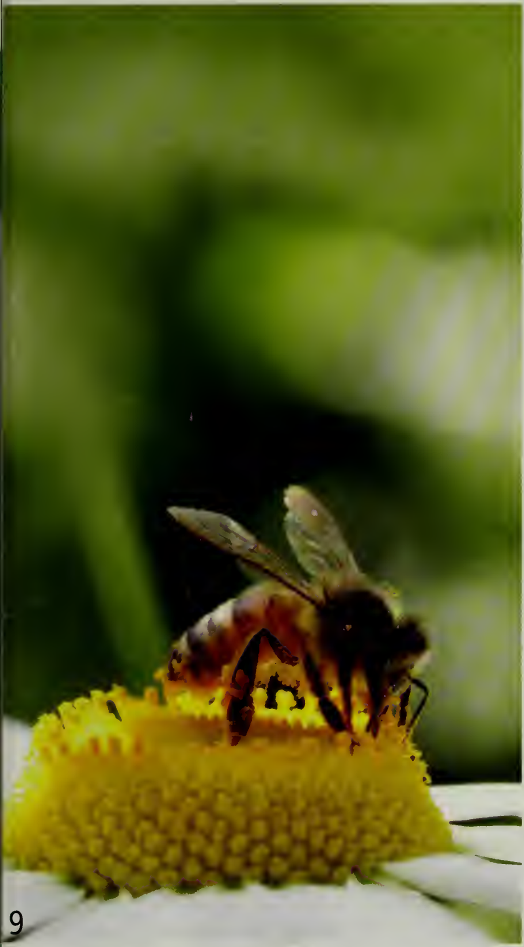
Third Way Media
radio, websites, DVDs

Faith & Life Resources
congregational resources & curriculum

A new agency serving Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

www.MennoMedia.org

TheMennonite August 2011 | Volume 14, Number 8



9

2

33

ON THE COVER: Photo by Vada Snider

CONTENTS

AMBS LIBRARY ELKHART, IN

12 Be a bridge
—Gordon Houser

17 We Are the Church Day

18 Delegate Assembly tries Pittsburgh Experiment
—Everett J. Thomas

22 Youth build bridges
—Anna Groff

26 Children collect money for day care
—Anna Groff

27 Junior youth: Be on the side of the cross
—Gordon Houser

28 Conversation rooms help build a strong bridge
—Laurie Oswald Robinson

29 Women identify needs and next steps
—Anna Groff

30 A youth group's first convention
—Anna Groff

31 Fernando feeds the Mennonite multitudes
—Laurie Oswald Robinson

37 Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship launches
—Melanie Zuercher

38 Volunteer energized by recreation—Johnny Kauffman

45 First Mennonite woman ordained in NYC in 100 years—Kenneth Thompson

52 Tractor Trek attracts 'farm girls'

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
August 2011 | Volume 14, Number 8

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: Everett J. Thomas
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Gordon Houser
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Anna Groff
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller
Design: Dee Birkey

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

End of an era

In response to the June article "End of an Era," I need to say a few words. The article was well written in presenting the facts as they happened. However, it was disappointing for me to read that as far back as 1971 there were people who felt that Scottdale had too much power.

As a child of one of the workers recruited to work at the former Mennonite Publishing House, I know our parents took their work seriously and felt it was a calling and willingly worked for less pay. Now—only as a former worker and not as part of the management team—I can say that no one but the ones who were "let go" in the beginning or later can attest to the ugliness we felt from our denominational leaders.

There were reactions as strong as leaving the church to staying and having no respect for top leadership—not to mention the effect it had on local non-Mennonites who were let go. I also gave 27 years of service to the former MPH/MPN and was one of the later ones to lose my job due to the restructuring of the organization. So I know what I am saying. I am a Scottdale Mennonite and former resident.*—Ruby Hurst, Waynesboro, Va.*

Thank you for John Sharp's "End of An Era" and Everett Thomas' editorial, "The End of Publication in Scottdale." I hope this will not be the last word about the Mennonite Publishing House, its accomplishments and contributions to the church.

John Andrew Hostetler in his book *God Uses Ink* told the story to 1958. Now the rest of the story must be told about publishing periodicals, books, curriculum and other congregational literature; about book-selling and Provident Bookstores; about printing and about the publication board and churchwide boards that impinged upon its successes and failures; and about pioneering efforts in inter-Mennonite publishing. Hopefully, this will be done soon while many of those people involved with MPH are still living and can provide helpful insights into the MPH story from 1958 to the present.

MPH funded *God Uses Ink*. Now it is gone. Are funds available anywhere in the church to complete the story that *God Uses Ink* began?*—Paul M. Lederach, Lansdale, Pa.*

In response to John E. Sharp's article "End of an Era": This is an excellent article. However, its information is limited mostly to objective structural history and does not deal much with the possible end of and distribution of literature.

My interest in this article is prompted by 25 years managing Provident Bookstores owned by the Mennonite Publishing House, seven of the years as director of all 13 stores. Just prior to reading the article I phoned two of the larger stores (previously Provident) now owned by private owners and asked for suggestions for a book to give to a granddaughter graduating from high school. I was disappointed by their lack of knowledge of the contents of books suggested and that their guidance was completely from what is currently selling best. I asked to speak to the knowledgeable staff members who select the titles. I was given the answer, "We sell the books; we don't help select them; the selections are made by the home office."

This raises the questions as to

whether this service to the church has come to an end? I hope not and that there will be strong efforts to maintain it. Should not this work be increased? I believe the church will suffer if we don't.—*Mark Moyer, Davidsville, Pa.*

I want to thank the editors and John Sharp for a wonderful story about the loss of an important Mennonite institution. Whenever an organization as longstanding and important as Mennonite Publishing House goes by the wayside, we in the Anabaptist world need to be told about the loss. I am sure there are a lot of Mennonites who will mourn the change in status of "Mennonite Publishing House," even if it is not actually going out of business. The history and the pictures are a blessing to those of us who might know some of the people involved.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Ca.*

Thanks for the picture on the cover of the June issue. I forgot what the Mennonite Publishing House looked like. I was at Laurelville camp the first two years the Mennonite Church bought the camp, and I met many people who worked at MPH. Several years later, on our wedding trip west, we stopped to see the publishing house and friends. If I remember that an Evelyn Shoemaker gave us a tour. That was April 1947. —*John Thomas, Millersville, Pa.*

Vouchers from coercion

The decision by Bethany Christian Schools to accept state vouchers is sure to generate reaction ("Bethany Will Accept Tuition Vouchers," July). Set aside the question of flags and pledges. Should an official institution of Mennonite Church USA accept a state subsidy in the first place?

The public subsidy to private schools is indirect, channeled through the student's choice. But a school voucher is still funded by state taxes. Although a school's choice to accept vouchers and the student's choice of school are voluntary, paying taxes to fund vouchers is not voluntary. The taxation system is effectively coercive—the only (legal) way to escape taxation is to forego income and avoid commerce. School choice through vouchers is thus subsidized by state coercion through taxation. To accept a state subsidy through school vouchers, then, is to benefit from and so participate in a coercive system.

The Anabaptist tradition, while agreeing that Christians should pay taxes to support the state, rejected the state's taxes to support the church as much as the state's sword to defend the church. No one should be compelled to support the church through taxation anymore than be compelled to join the church by baptism. How does Bethany's decision square with the Anabaptist tradition?—*Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, Lima, Ohio*

Spaulding on dismissal account

Regarding "Official Account of Spaulding Dismissal," (July): I appreciate that Ervin Stutzman notes that the official published account is his understanding of what led him to expel me from the binational worship council without saying it is the only account. A few observations and points of clarification:

When I attended the binational worship council meeting in October 2010, I wondered aloud briefly how my position as an openly gay pastor might affect the work of the council. It was a two-minute conversation in which no one at the gathering objected to my service on the council or in the denomination.

A Mennonite Church USA representative at the meeting reported being informed by a denominational leader that I could continue to serve as long as I

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Although less than 10 percent of those who read *The Mennonite* attended Pittsburgh 2011, we devote many pages of this issue to the biennial convention held July 2-9. The reason: Conventions establish new reference points for the church; during the next two years, many of the decisions and directions for Mennonite Church USA will be based on what happened at the convention. So our coverage is intended to especially help those who did not attend Pittsburgh 2011 understand the ways our denomination has been changed by the event that brought together 6,700 adults, youth and children.

But other newsworthy things happened outside the convention experience. Heinz D. Janzen, who served as general secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church during the 1970s, died June 15 (page 6). He was 83. He served in this position from 1969-1979. In other news, two former organizations serving Mennonite doctors and nurses formally merged on June 23 as Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (see page 37). We also publish a retrospective on Third Way Media—formerly Mennonite Media—which merged with Mennonite Publishing Network on July 1 to form MennoMedia (page 40).

Other news illustrates the tough economic environment in which Mennonite mission agencies find themselves. Both Eastern Mennonite Missions (page 43) and Mennonite Mission Network (page 50) are cutting staff.

But there is also good news. Executive Board member Addie Banks becomes only the second Mennonite African-American woman to be ordained to the ministry in New York City churches. The first was ordained 100 years ago (page 45).

But back to convention coverage: See page 56 for ways to get extra copies of this issue.—*Editor*

Heinz Janzen, former GC leader, pastor dies at 83

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Heinz D. Janzen, a pastor, church administrator and writer who served as general secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) during the 1970s, died June 15. He was 83.

Called to lead the GC in 1969, Janzen served at the denomination's Newton, Kan., office for more than 10 years.

Earlier, Janzen served pastorates at Calvary Mennonite Church in Washington, Ill., and Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron, Ohio.

Later, he served for 10 years as co-pastor with Dorothy, his wife, at Trinity Mennonite Church in Hillsboro, Kan.

Retiring from the ministry in 1990, he served six years as coordinator of Mennonite Men.

Janzen also wrote curriculum materials for the church and many articles for *The Mennonite* and with Dorothy edited and rewrote the *Minister's Manual*, published in 1983. He also served on the committee that produced the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, adopted by the GC and the Mennonite Church and now used by Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Janzen was born June 19, 1927, to Peter M. and Mary (Dirks) Janzen in a hospital elevator in New York City shortly after their arrival in the United States as immigrants from the Ukraine. He grew up in Ontario. Calif.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 1945 to 1947 as an electronic technician. He has bachelor's degrees from Bethel College, North Newton, and Goshen (Ind.) College, and a master of divinity degree from New York Theological Seminary.

He married Dorothea "Dotty" (Wirth) on Sept. 10, 1955. She survives.

A memorial service was held at Bethel College Mennonite Church in June.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Pittsburgh mayor honors Mennonites for work

GOSHEN, Ind.—Although the 6,700 Mennonites were long gone from the July 4-9 convention, Pittsburgh's mayor was still talking about their impact on his city the following week.

On July 12, mayor Luke Ravenstahl commended the work done by the volunteers during Pittsburgh 2011 by issuing a proclamation honoring their time and labor.

"Their many hours of volunteer work was an enormous benefit to many communities and neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh area," Jack Dougherty, the mayor's spokesman, said on July 13.

Arloa Bontrager, the Mennonite Mission Network staff person who coordinated the 2,800 volunteers who took part in Servant Projects, wasn't sure what the fuss was all about.

"I mean really, all of this was no big deal," Bontrager said July 18. "It's just what Mennonites do. However, it's nice to be appreciated."

The proclamation was mailed to the convention office on July 14.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everett Thomas

Traveling artist for God

Dmitri Kadiev (above) calls himself a traveling artist for God. He brought a large canvas to Pittsburgh 2011 and invited conventiongoers to contribute their artistic touches to the mural. He is involved with Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church.—*mPress*

Hundreds connect with delegates digitally

LANCASTER, Pa.—The Digital Delegate Network is a website that broadcast a live video and audio feed of all the delegate sessions that were held in Pittsburgh 2011. On the website is a live real-time chat room that instantaneously translates the typed conversation into 15 languages based on the individual users' preferred language.

The "digital audience table," as it was called, was hosted by Chris Landes and Robert Martin, who held online conversations with those who participated in the convention in this way. We broadcast a secondary live audio feed in Spanish that was produced by a team of translators in the room led by Sarah Thomas. As a result we increased participation in the first day of convention by 42 percent. There were about 800 delegates in the room in Pittsburgh; there were 336 online. Of those, 12 listened to the Hispanic audio feed. People who could not be physically present were included. The conversations are continuing.

Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman encouraged and supported this dream along the way. In all, the English broadcast brought in 1,127 unique viewers for a total 781 live viewing hours. The Spanish broadcast brought in 39 unique viewers for a total 9½ hours.—*Harry Jarrett*

Habegger receives AMBS Alumni Ministry award

ELKHART, Ind.—David L. Habegger, whose contributions to the church include congregational and conference ministry, denominational service and

Gordon Houser

BRIDGES TO CROSS

Aching for a cappella

The adult worship services at Pittsburgh 2011 had plenty of singing, but little of it was four-part, a cappella hymns. This apparently left many adults yearning for traditional hymns. They had their opportunity on July 7. "As I work at the goal of anti-racism," Executive Board staff member Glen Guyton said on July 8, "I see how powerful music can be. We tried to incorporate a diversity ... of music traditions [into adult worship]. Yet it left some feeling uncomfortable and others empowered. The hymn sing had more than 1,000 people who were hungry for a certain style and tradition—the style 'traditional' churches are use to." The evening of the hymn sing was during a "free evening" on the schedule.—*Everett J. Thomas*

seminary recruitment, has received the 2011 Alumni Ministry and Service Award from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Habegger grew up on a Cheyenne Indian reservation in Montana, the son of mission workers, and he credits this with his identity as a Mennonite, rather than as a member of a specific Mennonite denomination. He was an early proponent for the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) and the former Mennonite Church (MC).

Beginning congregational ministry in 1946, David served as pastor of congregations in California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. He began attending GCMC denominational gatherings in 1941 and was a delegate to all sessions from 1953 to 2001. He has also attended six Mennonite World Conference gatherings over the years.

Habegger earned a bachelor of divinity degree in 1949 from Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago, prior to the formation of AMBS, and he earned an M.A. from Northwestern/ Garrett Theological Seminary and a Rel.D. from Claremont School of Theology.

David now lives in North Newton, Kan., moving there from Newton after the death of LaVeta, his wife, in 2008. He is actively involved in deacon and visitation ministry with Bethel College Mennonite Church.—*AMBS*

MCC requests funds for East Africa drought aid

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is appealing for donations in response to a critical drought and food crisis in East Africa, which has affected about 11 million people.

MCC is responding in Kenya by supporting food-for-work projects. In Ethiopia, MCC funds are expected to be used for supplemental food for children under age 5 and lactating or pregnant women. As the impact of the crisis grows, MCC anticipates the potential for an expanded and ongoing response in these countries.

Two consecutive, poor rainy seasons have caused drought in large sections of Kenya and Ethiopia, where MCC has worked for 35 years. In addition to crop failure and many livestock deaths, the situation is exacerbated by high, local grain prices and areas of conflict.

MCC is committing $1.2 million through Canadian Foodgrains Bank to support two food-for-work programs in Kenya that will have short- and long-term benefits.

MCC also is assessing the possibility of responding to the needs of Somali refugees who are pouring into Ethiopia and Kenya by the tens of thousands.—*MCC*

Bluffton prof Bush wins Fulbright award

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University history professor Perry Bush has been selected as a Fulbright scholar and will study in the Ukraine next year.

The prestigious award, whose recipients have included 43 Nobel Prize winners, will take Bush—along with Elysia, his wife, and their eighth-grade daughter Cassidy—to Zaparozhye in southeastern Ukraine next January. He will teach American studies at Zaparozhye National University during spring semester 2012.

Bush has worked 20 years in higher education—including 17 years of teaching American history at Bluffton.

As a Mennonite scholar, Bush knew Ukraine to be the ancestral homeland of many current North American Mennonites. One large group came to the United States from southeastern Ukraine in the 1870s and another after World War I, but about 30,000 died in Stalinist purges of the 1920s and '30s.
—*Bluffton University*

To hell

Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

As we got to know our neighbors, we decided to invite them over for a weekly Bible study. One evening Michael joined us. I can't remember which Scripture we were studying, but I do remember the topic that dominated our discussion that week: hell.

As the rest of us flipped back and forth through the pages of our Bibles, arguing about the reality of hell and who would be there, Michael sat quietly on the sofa. Finally he leaned forward in his chair and spoke up. "Hey, I've been there."

All of us went silent and looked at him, curiously. He saw the questions on our faces and continued: "That's where I grew up—hell. You don't know nothin' about hell. I'll tell you about this place of weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Michael went on to tell us about what it was like to grow up in a house of prostitution, an urban brothel. We heard the sounds and sights of hell echo through his memories of childhood: the gnashing teeth of an addict's withdrawals, and the cries of weeping women—"the outer darkness where," as Jesus said, there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12).

He told us about the terror, as a child, of waking up in the middle of the night and seeing a dead man lying on the floor, the victim of a drug overdose.

"That's hell," Michael told us.

That day I learned that the flames of hell burn people in the land of the living. For many, hell is a place on earth.

That day I learned that the flames of hell burn people in the land of the living. For many, hell is a place on earth.

What's the good news for Michael and all the others who live in hell? I find a strange kind of hope when I get to a line in the middle of the Apostles' Creed: "he descended to the dead" (see *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #712).

In his death, Jesus plunges into the hidden recesses of the unholy. Why? Because, as the apostle Paul puts it, "neither death, nor life … nor height, nor depth will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Jesus' pilgrimage into the depths of the dead reveals the yearning of God's love, the gnawing ache within the heart of God when the Lover is separated from the beloved, when the creature is torn away from the Creator.

Since Jesus descended to the dead for the sake of the good news (1 Peter 3:19, 4:6), I have hope that he also visits those who find themselves living in hell on earth—people like Michael, who cannot forget being thrown into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When we confess in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus went to the dead, we proclaim that the agony of hell is not foreign territory for God, that the Holy Spirit does not abandon the abandoned and that Jesus Christ is a companion to the forsaken.

As Mennonites, we confess our faith not just with our mouths but also with our lives. Jesus invites us into his way of love, a love that descends to the tormented. When the eternal love of Jesus flows through us, we find ourselves caught up in this same movement. The Holy Spirit invites us to follow in the way of Jesus, the One who went into the abyss to reveal the good news of God's love for the world.

Hell has an address in our neighborhoods and in our cities, at least that's what I learned from Michael. To walk with Jesus is to find the places on earth where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth and to wait with those in the abyss of hell for the Holy Spirit to bring God's comfort. Jesus descended to the dead. Will you join him?

This column was adapted from a sermon Villegas preached at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., on Feb. 22, 2009.

God of burning bushes and sweet honey

by Jeff Gundy

Jeff Gundy is a poet who teaches at Bluffton (Ohio) University and is a member of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton. He is author of Walker in the Fog *and* Spoken Among the Trees. *The line "justice will take millions of intricate moves" is from William Stafford's poem "Thinking for Berky," slightly altered.*

God of wisdom,
rescue us from our foolishness,
our willingness to believe entrancing lies.
God of all people, rescue us from our poverty.
Keep us safe from danger,
keep us from too much comfort,
help us recognize our riches and our gifts
and use them for others.
God of burning bushes and mystery,
rescue us from the makers of clear, cruel rules
and from walls and laws that divide us.
We know that justice
will take millions of intricate moves—
but help us to make the right move today,
and the next one tomorrow.
God of cities and villages,
of forests and fields,
of oceans and mountains,
help us look beyond our small lives,
remember the future,
heal the broken places
in your lovely fallen world.
God of music and beauty, of song and poetry,
let our voices rise, our words flower for you.
Help us praise and mourn,
cry and laugh
for the strange and precious lives
you have given us.
Help us find and eat together
your sweet honey in the rock. Amen.

We are not prepared for climate change

In the June 6 issue of *Newsweek*, Sharon Begley writes in her article "Are You Ready for More?" that we are not ready for the extreme-weather events that have happened and will continue to happen.

"Even those who deny the existence of global climate change are having trouble dismissing the evidence of the last year," she writes. She recounts that evidence: nearly 1,000 tornadoes in the United States have killed more than 500 people and caused $9 billion in damage; the wettest April in the Midwest in 116 years; the driest month in a century in drought-plagued Texas. Meanwhile, the 2010 heat wave in Russia killed about 15,000 people, while floods in Australia and Pakistan killed 2,000. A months-long drought in China devastated millions of acres of farmland, and 2010 was the hottest year on earth since weather records began.

"The stable climate of the last 12,000 years is gone," she writes, and "we are not prepared."

Although it's beginning to dawn on civic leaders across the United States that they'll need to help their communities face coming dangers, "from disappearing islands in Chesapeake Bay to dust bowls in the Plains and horrific hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico," only 14 states are even planning climate-change adaptation.

They'll have to work quickly because too much time was lost to inaction. "The Bush administration was a disaster, but the Obama administration has accomplished next to nothing either, in part because a significant part of the Democratic Party is inclined to balk on this issue as well," says economist Jeffrey Sachs, head of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

Vicki Arroyo, executive director of the Georgetown Climate Center, says that the Bush administration did not want to talk about climate change, let alone adaptation to it. In fact, President Bush killed what author Mark Hertsgaard in the 2011 book *Hot* calls "a key adaptation tool," the National Climate Assessment, an analysis of the vulnerabilities in U.S. regions and ideas for coping with them. "There are no adaptation experts in the federal government, let alone states or cities," says Arroyo. "They've just been commandeered from other departments."

Begley explains that the impacts of climate change are complex. "The burning of fossil fuels has raised atmospheric levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide by 40 percent above what they were before the Industrial Revolution. The added heat in the atmosphere retains more moisture, ratchets up the energy in the system and incites more violent and extreme weather."

While scientists disagree about whether climate change will bring more intense or frequent tornadoes, Begley writes, "there is wide consensus that the 2 degrees Fahrenheit of global warming of the last century is behind the rise in sea levels, more intense hurricanes, more heat waves and more droughts and deluges."

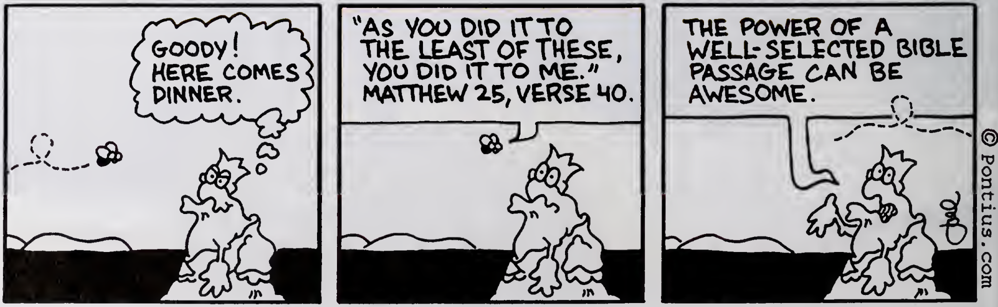
"You can no longer say that the climate of the future is going to be like the climate of today, let alone yesterday," says Judi Greenwald, vice president of innovative solutions at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change.

While other countries work to adapt to climate, America resists. Why? Sachs points to the lobbying power of industries that resist acknowledgment of climate change's impact. "The airwaves are filled with corporate-financed climate misinformation," Sachs says.

Time is getting short, and the stakes are high. Daniel Sarewitz, a professor of science and society at Arizona State University, says, "Not to adapt is to consign millions of people to death and disruption."—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


GOODY! HERE COMES DINNER.
"AS YOU DID IT TO THE LEAST OF THESE, YOU DID IT TO ME." MATTHEW 25, VERSE 40.
THE POWER OF A WELL-SELECTED BIBLE PASSAGE CAN BE AWESOME.
© Pontius.com

> “A mounting body of economic research indicates that the rise in pay for company executives is a critical feature in the widening income gap.”
> —*Washington Post*

The demands on pastors

“Imagine an institution that requires its leaders to attend not only college but graduate school,” writes Jerry Bowyer in his April 20 Forbes.com blog. “Imagine that the graduate school in question is constitutionally forbidden from receiving any form of government aid, that it typically requires three years of full-time schooling for the diploma, that the nature of the schooling bears almost no resemblance to the job in question and that the pay for graduates is far lower than other professions. You have just imagined the relationship between the Christian church and her seminaries.”—*Christian Century*

Hell to pay

Southern Baptists on June 14 called hell an “eternal, conscious punishment” for those who do not accept Jesus, rebutting a controversial book from Michigan pastor Rob Bell that questions traditional views of hell. Citing Bell’s book *Love Wins*, the resolution urges Southern Baptists “to proclaim faithfully the depth and gravity of sin against a holy God, the reality of hell and the salvation of sinners by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.”
—*Religion News Service*

The main causes of the budget shortfall

Though a large majority of Americans blame the nation’s budget problems on wasteful spending, “the biggest culprit, by far, has been an erosion of tax revenue triggered largely by two recessions and multiple rounds of tax cuts,” the *Washington Post* reported in May. “Together, the economy and the tax bills enacted under former President George W. Bush, and to a lesser extent by President Obama, wiped out $6.3 trillion in anticipated revenue.” Other budget busters include the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, which have added $1.3 trillion in new borrowing, and the prescription-drug benefit from Medicare, which added $272 billion. Obama’s stimulus plan added $719 billion. The Troubled Asset Relief Program, though much despised, added only $16 billion and may end up paying for itself. Obama-era decisions account for about $1.7 trillion in new debt, according to a *Washington Post* analysis of a decade of Congressional Budget Office data, the *Post* reported. “Bush-era policies, meanwhile, account for more than $7 trillion.”—*Wichita Eagle*

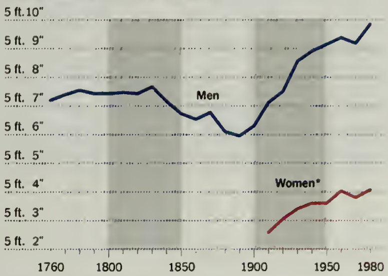
$32 billion

amount spent since 1995 by the U.S. Army on equipment that was never built.—*Christian Century*

Humans supersize

The Changing Body: Health, Nutrition, and Human Development in the Western World Since 1700 by Robert W. Fogel examines changes in body size since 1700. The average height of native-born American men rose four inches between 1890 and 1980. (See chart below.)—*New York Times*

AVERAGE HEIGHT OF NATIVE-BORN AMERICANS



*Data not available for women prior to 1910.

Source: “The Changing Body,” by Floud, Fogel, Harris and Hong

Out of Afghanistan, say church leaders

As President Obama prepared plans to bring a limited number of U.S. troops home from Afghanistan, a group of 40 religious leaders called for the president to “bring the war in Afghanistan to an end.” Signers of an open letter, including high-profile religious leaders such as Sojourners founder Jim Wallis, expressed frustration over the “deteriorating” state of affairs in Afghanistan and the rising military and civilian death toll, saying “the military situation is at best a stalemate.”
—*Religion News Service*

Prosperity index

The Legatum Institute’s index of prosperity measures material wealth and quality of life among 110 nations. The 2010 index ranks the top 10:

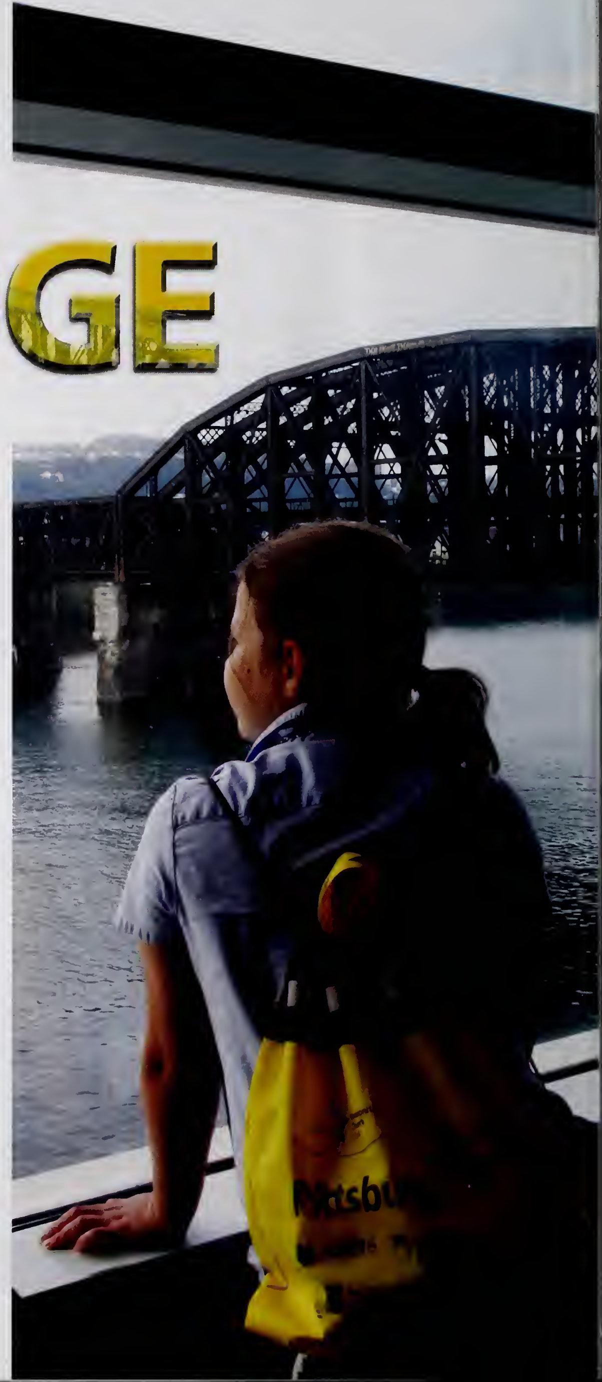
1. Norway
2. Denmark
3. Finland
4. Australia
5. New Zealand
6. Sweden
7. Canada
8. Switzerland
9. The Netherlands
10. United States

—Time

Participants at Pittsburgh 2011 learn about reconciliation and express their desire to live it out.

Be a BRIDGE

by Gordon Houser



The adult worship band at Pittsburgh 2011 repeatedly led participants in the refrain, "Be the bridge, I can be the bridge … to Jesus." In their singing, their prayers, the sermons and stories, these participants focused on reconciliation, expressed their desire for it and confessed their failure to live it out faithfully. Learning to be a bridge to Jesus, they learned, does not happen easily or overnight or merely by talking about it. But talking and listening and wanting it may be a good start.

The convention began on July 4 with a joint worship service. Following a dramatization by Ted and Company of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, Shane Hipps called on the thousands of adults and youth gathered to live by the higher virtue of reconciliation rather than by the divisions of those promoting either justice or purity.

Addressing the convention's text, 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, and the night's theme, "Focus in the Cross," Hipps, who is a teaching pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., explored the meaning of the Greek words translated "reconciliation." While they mean "against difference," they go further than that to include coming together, "like a drop of rain that falls into the ocean and becomes the ocean."

Hipps, who formerly served as pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, outlined Mennonite distinctives—such as community, service and nonviolence—that drew him to the Mennonite faith. But "we can have too much of a good thing and create boundaries within," he said.

He noted that there have been issues of division throughout human history and in the church, though the issues change. Nevertheless, he said, church divisions generally fall into two patterns: justice vs. holiness. One side wants inclusion, the other purity. Both use Scripture to support their positions, and both feel they are victims.

But while justice and holiness are virtues, they are not the highest virtue. Instead they are innate, related to fear, anger and hurt, he said. The higher virtue is reconciliation, which Jesus modeled. "It is not easy," Hipps said. While justice and purity use a hammer to smash a rock, reconciliation uses it to shape the rock into something beautiful.

The way of Jesus moves beyond these categories, Hipps said, acknowledges the hurts and invites us to compassion.

"When you create sides," he said, you soon choose colors and devolve into tribal warfare.

Mennonites are one of the few communities of faith that emphasizes love of the enemy. "That teaching is needed more than ever," Hipps said. "The ministry of reconciliation is the chemotherapy that fights the cancer of division."

He asked his audience to consider three questions: Have fear and anger blinded you to the ministry of reconciliation? Do you need to ask forgiveness of someone you have hurt? Do you need to forgive someone who has hurt you?

Hipps offered this version of Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female [Mennonite nor non-Mennonite, soldier nor pacifist, liberal nor conservative, young nor old, sinner nor saint, those who sing the National Anthem nor those who do not, gay nor straight, bigot nor enlightened one, immigrant nor native]. For you are all one in Christ."

Reconciliation and love of enemy are the bread and butter of the Mennonite faith; now make me a sandwich.—Shane Hipps

Hipps ended his sermon with this request: ▶

Ted and Company perform a humorous skit at the opening worship at Pittsburgh 2011 on July 4, dramatizing the Jerusalem council from Acts 15. Photo by Everett Thomas

"Reconciliation and love of enemy are the bread and butter of the Mennonite faith; now make me a sandwich."

On July 5, Madeline Maldonado, associate pastor of Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvación in Fort Myers, Fla., told the harrowing story of her childhood in her talk "Bridge to New Life."

With God's power within me, I forgave him. —Madeline Maldonado

She is the daughter of a woman who gave birth to her when she was 12, Maldonado said. She grew up in foster homes, was baptized in the Catholic Church and doesn't know who her father is.

When she was 9, Maldonado said, her stepfather abused her sexually and hit her with a belt. She hated him and dreamed of a day when she could take vengeance on him.

At age 12, she left home and ended up at a halfway house in Allentown, Pa. The counselors asked her if she had been abused, but she said no. Her stepfather had told her that if she told anyone what he did to her, he would cut her up and feed her to her mother.

The counselors found her mother and brought her to the halfway house. She told them her daughter was a whore and should be put on the street.

She left Allentown and made her way to New York City. There her godparents found her and took her to Florida. When she was 19, she met David, now her husband. Later they accepted Christ, and she found new life.

Years later, she went to see her mother, and her stepfather was there. He begged her forgiveness. "With God's power within me," she said, "I forgave him."

David's family accepted her and welcomed her, she said. Now she and David give leadership to a church made up mostly of undocumented immigrants. They welcome these people.

Maldonado said that many times she wanted to commit suicide, but David's patience and the welcome of people in the church helped her stay alive.

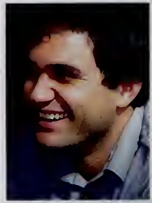
In preparation for this talk, she said, she studied bridges. She learned that bridges need a strong foundation. She urged people to "return to our foundations."

Bridges also need to be inspected, she said. If we don't identify who we are, the bridge can be in trouble. "One of the foundations of the Mennonite bridge is to live out our faith," she said. "Let's live it out."

The worship service ended with the celebration of Communion.

July 6 was designated We Are the Church Day at Pittsburgh 2011 (see page 17). The adult worship focused on "Life on the Bridge" and featured three storytellers.

Isaac Villegas, pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship and the child of Latin American immigrants, told about a footwashing service his congregation shared with St. John's Baptist Church, an African-American congregation.



File photo

Isaac Villegas

When an older black man called Deacon Marlow was about to wash his feet, Villegas said he wanted to protest that a man whose ancestors were slaves should not wash his feet. Instead, he thought, he should wash this man's feet.

He recalled an experience in which a young white girl said her mother told her not to touch "dirty Mexicans" because she might get lice.

As Deacon Marlow washed his feet, Villegas said, "I experienced God's presence."

Betsy Headrick McCrae, pastor of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church in Ladewood, Colo., talked about white privilege.

Betsy Headrick McCrae

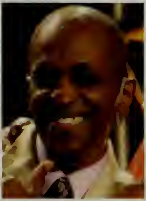
"I have received the gift of disequilibrium," she said, "of being knocked off my feet." She told of being in Hanoi, Vietnam, in a world she would never own, a stranger to the culture. But she knew she was known by God, she said.

A few years earlier, she said, she was in Brussels, Belgium. A co-worker wondered if she had a college education, having as-

Participants at adult worship celebrate Communion on July 5 at Pittsburgh 2011. Photo by Everett Thomas

sumed from McCrae's ability to speak French that she had not been to college.

"Being made new has meant letting go of a sense of entitlement," McCrae said. She said she felt God tell her that all these differences are part of who God is.



Alfred "Al" Taylor

Alfred "Al" Taylor, pastor of Infinity Mennonite Church and the founder of Man Up in Harlem, N.Y., talked about his struggle to be willing to lay down his life.

He said he once met Ron Sider, who asked him what he would do if someone attacked him with a gun. At the time, he said he'd grab his own gun.

Years later, when in Haiti, he was confronted with the question of whether or not he would lay down his life for God. He said yes.

On July 7, Danisa Ndlovu, president of Mennonite World Conference, spoke on "Bridges to the Cross."

One day, he said, when he was a boy in Zimbabwe, he and his mother crossed a bridge. He was so scared he wanted to crawl, even though his mother held his hand.

Later he learned that even though crossing bridges can be scary, bridges "enable us to discover what's on the other side, to communicate, come together and eliminate the us-and-them mentality."

In 1965, leaders of Ndlovu's native land, then called Rhodesia, met on a bridge that spanned Victoria Falls to declare a commitment to work toward an independent Zimbabwe. That independence finally came in 1980, after more meetings on that same bridge.

Other nations came to Zimbabwe to help rebuild a country ravaged by war. When peoples, nations and believers reconcile, Ndlovu said, "they are able to walk together into the future."

"The church is called to serve as a bridge to bring together different tribes and nations," Ndlovu said. At the center of the gospel is the message of reconciliation, he said.

Such reconciliation can be difficult. He said that at one time his church in Zimbabwe faced the question of foot-washing when some members had AIDS. Those with AIDS felt shamed. Then, after a heated debate, a woman stood up and said, "Then we should stop all baptisms." The debate ended.

Have you faced discrimination? Ndlovu asked. He said that when he was a boy, another boy told him, "You are made of burnt wood." Later a lady spoke healing words, "You are beautifully and wonderfully made."

When we build bridges, the world will know there is a new creation.
—Danisa Ndlovu

Another woman who had been assaulted and consequently could have no more children told him she found freedom when she forgave the men who attacked her. The person who offers forgiveness, Ndlovu said, "has taken the risk to be in a new relationship."

When the Lutherans asked forgiveness from Mennonites for their persecution of Anabaptists, it changed their relationship, he said. "We can no longer speak of Lutherans as enemies," he said.

The New Testament calls us to bear one an-

When political differences keep us from engaging one another in love, we sin just like the Corinthians.
—Ervin Stutzman

other in love, Ndlovu said, even while it reflects a church with diverse views. “When we build bridges,” he said, “the world will know there is a new creation.”

On the other hand, divisions among Christians become a stumbling block to the church.

We cross bridges, he concluded, to meet at the cross of Christ. Reconciliation must begin in the household of faith.

Following Ndlovu’s talk, the assembly took an offering for the outreach ministries of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

At the final adult worship on July 8, Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, explored in his talk “Be the Bridge” Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church.

Stutzman pointed out that these letters represent a prime example of persuasive literature, and 2 Corinthians “is not a theological treatise but a personal plea,” he said.

Stutzman looked at the meaning of the term “ambassador,” which Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 5:20. At that time, an ambassador was a bridge between nations. “Even if you’re in a foreign nation, your heart is in your homeland.”

Why does Paul tell Christians to be reconciled to God? Stutzman asked. And how do they show they’re reconciled? “By opening their hearts,” he said. And “it’s not a one-time choice but ongoing.” We may keep God distant in certain areas, he said. And being reconciled “is not just personal but social,” he said.

Since we are called to be ambassadors, Stutzman said, we must first be reconciled. However, “we’re in a political bus careening from one ditch to another,” he said, noting the divisions that occur in our churches.

What would Jesus say to us? Stutzman asked. “Get off the bus.” He went on: “When political differences keep us from engaging one another in love, we sin just like the Corinthians.”

Stutzman ended his talk by calling for confession. “Being a bridge to the cross … often invites us to confess our sins,” he said. We tend to point out the sins in others, he said, but “maybe we need to take the plank out of our own eye and lay it down to make a bridge to the cross.”

Following Stutzman’s talk was an anointing service. Anointing, he said, says that we need God’s presence. It’s also a tool for healing.

Participants at the final adult worship receive an anointing on July 8 at Pittsburgh 2011. Photo by Everett Thomas

Final registration numbers

Adults	2,310
K-5	182
Infants/Toddlers	56
Junior High	199
Preschool	64
Volunteers (full time)	263
Youth and Sponsors	3,627
Total	**6,701**

We Are the Church Day

Pittsburgh 2011 sets aside one day to highlight diversity in Mennonite Church USA.

Tony Brown, artist in residence and sociology professor at Hesston (Kan.) College, sings a hymn as part of "Common Threads," a presentation on We Are the Church Day at Pittsburgh 2011. He and John Sharp, history professor at Hesston College, gave voice to Anabaptist martyrs and enslaved African Americans by singing their hymns and telling their stories. Their program identified ways Anabaptist religious persecution and African-American racial suffering have intersected, both finding hope amid pain and humiliation. Photo by Everett Thomas

Film provokes discussion of immigration

Several hundred people showed up in the evening of We Are the Church Day to view the film "Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey" and discuss their reactions.

Iris de León-Hartshorn, director for transformative peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA, introduced the 35-minute film, which documents the experiences of many migrants who try to cross the border from Mexico to the United States in order to provide for their families in Mexico.

Mixing narrative with interviews with migrants, with those helping them, with border patrol officers and with experts in the broader realities of immigration, the film is a powerful testimony to the humanity of those seeking not wealth but survival. The stories make clear that the vast majority of those seeking to make it to "el norte" (the north) are desperate and do not want to leave their homes.

Because much of the border is closely watched or closed by a wall, many migrants try to cross in a harrowing journey across desert wastes, and some die in the attempt. Many of these migrants are religious, and their faith helps them persist in their attempts to find even menial jobs in the United States that pay 10 times what they would make in Mexico.

Following the film, those in attendance divided into groups of a half dozen or so and responded to these questions: How did this film make you feel? How does this issue connect with your community? What biblical story relates to this? What ethic does this call you to? Representatives from each group came up front and wrote down responses to the last two questions on pieces of paper attached to the wall.

Several people shared responses with the whole group. One person said we need to make it easier for people to stay home by helping Mexico's economy. One said our churches need to be more welcoming of undocumented immigrants and not be afraid. Another read from Ephesians 2 and called on people to remember that we were strangers.

De León-Hartshorn said that Mennonite Church USA is committed to working harder on immigration issues and will consider the ideas shared by participants.

The film is available from Mennonite Central Committee for use by congregations or other groups.—*Gordon Houser*

Delegate Assembly tries Pittsburgh Experiment

Article and photos by Everett J. Thomas

Approximately 800 congregational and conference representatives met in the 2011 Delegate Assembly at Pittsburgh July 5-9. Four sessions on July 5 started with orientation to the week and introduction of the elements in this year's gathering.

Tuesday

The July 5 sessions also included:

- introduction of an antiracism audit of the convention itself (see photo on page 19);
- a brief review of Mennonite Church USA's 10-year history by former moderators Lee Snyder, Duane Oswald and Roy Williams;
- a report on the success of The Corinthian Plan by Keith Harder;
- a refresher course on "missional church theology" by Stanley Green and Eli Soto Albrecht;
- greetings from Mennonite World Conference leader Danisa Ndlovu and discussion of visa concerns for the 2015 MWC Assembly in Harrisburg, Pa.;
- discussion of and adoption of a covenant between Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada;
- greetings from ecumenical visitors.

Bishop Donald McCoid, an executive with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, described the 2010 gathering in Stuttgart, Germany, where the Lutheran World Federation formally apologized for the persecution of Anabaptists beginning with the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

"Lutherans repented of violent persecution of reformers," McCoid said. "We asked forgiveness from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers. There were tears, there was embracing, and there was joy."

McCoid said the votes on the apology were unanimous in acknowledging the persecution.

"In recent years we have become familiar with *Martyrs' Mirror*," he said, "and the depth of the peacemaking life. Many Lutherans said, 'We did not know [about the persecutions].'"

MC USA moderator Ed Diller shows moderator-elect Dick Thomas a message sent through a new, "digital delegate" service (see page 6). More than 300 people logged in from off-site. Viewers could also watch live video streaming of the open-mic sessions.

Wednesday

On July 6, the delegates were asked to decide how they would do the business of the church through the remainder of the week. Proposed by Mennonite Church USA leaders, the "Pittsburgh Experiment" did away with resolutions for this assembly only.

In introducing the document, moderator Ed Diller explained that the Executive Board "thought [the Pittsburgh Experiment] gives more authority to the delegate assembly rather than less."

Diller also said discernment in the fashion prescribed by the proposal would be countercultural.

"Our meetings on the work of the church should look less like the world around us," he said.

After two open-mic periods where table representatives offered both objections and affirmations, the Delegate Assembly overwhelmingly supported the experiment.

But some delegates were not happy about the change.

"If I can't bring a resolution, I can't express what my folks [in my congregation] are thinking about," said Audrey Roth Kraybill, from Lancaster, Pa. "I will express things in my (table) group, but I'm restless about it. I'm just not getting it."

In a later open-mic session, others expressed support for the proposal.

"Resolutions tend to cut off discernment," said Matt Weaver, from Millersburg, Ohio.

Terry Diener, from Goshen, Ind., agreed and said, "I had a sense of relief when I read about [the proposal], because statements cause polarization."

Although the delegates wanted to take time to hear as many voices as possible—and voted down an early motion to cease debate—only about 30 of the some 800 delegates voted against the Pittsburgh Experiment.

Anti-racism Audit Team (left to right): Keith Regehr, Valentina Salvedi, Hannah Kurtz and Millie Fe Penner

MC USA moderator Ed Diller (right) congratulates Mennonite Publishing Network leaders Phil Bontrager (center), board chair, and Ron Rempel, CEO, for their service with MPN. Both positions ended when MPN merged with Third Way Media to form MennoMedia.

The July 6 delegate session also kicked off We Are the Church Day. Delegates spent the most time focusing on the work of the Racial Healing Task Group, an all-white group of leaders.

"All are Anglos," said Executive Board member Charlotte Hardt, "at the request of our racial and ethnic brothers and sisters."

"Our ultimate goal," said task group member Ruth Yoder Wenger of New York City, "is to help Mennonite Church USA view our [racial ethnic diversity] as an asset."

> All I hear about is keeping kids out of the military. But I don't hear how to keep kids from killing each other, keep them from fighting. ... We need resources to teach peace to our children.—Yvonne Platt

Although the task group's proposals retained the language of antiracism, it also introduced a new term: multicultural transformation.

"We find the language more biblical," said Todd Jones of Freeman, S.D.

But Leslie Francisco III of Hampton, Va., and his table group disagreed with the change. "We think that antiracism should be the priority. Antiracism is the diagnosis; multicultural transformation is the treatment."

Others also disliked the new language.

" 'Multicultural' does not reflect issues of power, and 'antiracism' does," said Nina Lanctot, Bristol, Ind.

Also on July 6, delegates said farewell to two Mennonite Publishing Network leaders who con-

Donald McCoid, an executive with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, described the 2010 gathering in Stuttgart, Germany, where the Lutheran World Federation formally apologized for the persecution of Anabaptists.

cluded their service: board president Phil Bontrager and CEO Ron Rempel (see page 19).

Thursday

The churchwide priority "Wholistic Witness" was the theme of the first session on July 7. Executive Board staff member Andre Stoner Gingerich opened the discussion.

"We love service," he said, "we flirt with peace, and we are allergic to evangelism."

The open-mic comments after table group discussion focused primarily on church planting.

"The area of church planting is underdeveloped," said Western District conference minister Clarence Rempel. "I encourage the national body to put some specificity [into how churches should be planted]."

Steve Heatwole, Columbia, Pa., sought to reduce the pressure congregations feel around this churchwide priority.

"Each congregation should not be burdened with the whole, encompassing goal," Heatwole said. "But each congregation should be faithful to what it can do and let the national body be responsible for the whole."

But Yvonne Platt, Norristown, Pa., had concerns more urgent than planting churches.

"In Mennonite circles," Platt said, "all I hear about is keeping kids out of the military. But I don't hear how to keep kids from killing each other, keep them from fighting. I've been in the streets breaking up fights. We need resources to teach peace to our children."

The second session on July 7 focused on leadership development. Duane Beck, Raleigh, N.C., announced the creation of the Peter and Reta Mae Wiebe Endowment Fund for full-time interns exploring pastoral ministry. The fund will be administered by the Mennonite Church USA ministerial leadership office. Beck said that Peter was his mentor. Beck also said that he had served as a mentor to former pastor and now Executive Board staff member Terry Shue, and Shue served as a mentor to other younger pastors.

"[Among] the three of us," Beck said, "we have had 60 mentees."

Friday

The morning sessions on July 8 focused on two churchwide priorities: Christian formation and stewardship. The Binational Worship Council used the occasion to garner suggestions from the delegates about hymns that should be in any new hymnal.

During the discussion on stewardship, delegates heard that the funding system in Mennonite Church USA is broken. MC USA leader Marty Lehman said the first fruits concept, established at the beginning of Mennonite Church USA in 2001, was good, but the implementation of the theology behind it was not.

Lehman listed numerous problems with the implementation:

- Not all MC USA agencies and groups are included.
- It required that area conferences change their funding patterns; only two conferences made that

Open-mic: Gary Blosser, Fleetwood, Pa., reported to the Delegate Assembly for his table group.

transition.

- The plan assumed financial health for each churchwide agency, but many have struggled during the recession [and couldn't fulfill their obligations to fund the Executive Board]. There is no Plan B.
- The Executive Board relies totally on gifts from the churchwide agencies and area conferences, and the EB has not been allowed to do direct fund-raising.

"The fund-raising system," Lehman said, "was supposed to reduce direct solicitation [to individuals]. But, in fact, it has increased. There is a tension in the way we do fund-raising."

After a period of table group discussions and open-mic comments, the delegate assembly voted on whether the Executive Board should launch a review of the funding system. Delegates voted overwhelmingly for such a review.

The afternoon session on July 8 focused on the Purposeful Plan, a 16-page document that MC USA leaders said would continually be changed. But it was one section entitled "Resources or Regulation" that drew the most attention.

"I grew up in a highly regulated church," said Marlin Zimmerman, Richland, Pa. "But now we're slipping down a road of no regulation. We need a balance."

David W. Shenk, Mountville, Pa., said that MC USA came together with a foundational commitment to membership.

"I wish for a clear statement on accountability," Shenk said.

In response, MC USA executive director Ervin Stutzman read some excerpts from the membership guidelines.

"This is what the church has said," Stutzman said after each section, "and this is what I believe."

Saturday

The final delegate sessions on Saturday morning, July 9, focused first on the churchwide priority "Christian Community" and featured two pastors of large and growing congregations: Sunoko Lin of Maranatha Christian Fellowship in Los Angeles and Esdras Ferrara (through a video), leader of the 1,000-member Sonido de Alabanza congregation in Cicero, Ill.

"As a leader in the church," moderator Ed Diller said after the Sonido de Alabanza video, "I am embarrassed to say I did not know there was a Mennonite church of 1,000 with such vibrancy."

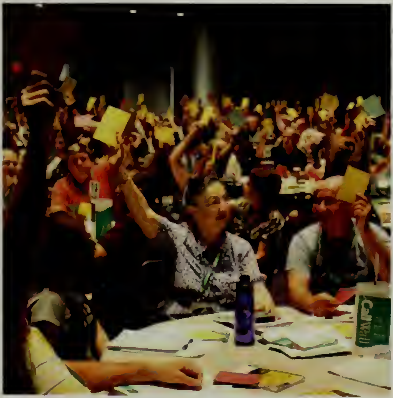
The final session on July 9 was devoted to a report from Mennonite Central Committee, a final report from the convention listening committee and transition rituals. Because no resolutions were introduced during the delegate sessions, the resolutions committee had little to do.

"We felt like the Maytag repairman this week," said committee chair David Boshart.

Moderator Ed Diller closed the 2011 Delegate Assembly reflecting on his experience as moderator.

"The experience was life-changing," Diller said, "wonderful, tedious and difficult but one I could never have anticipated. I am very confident in this group and the wisdom you showed this week."

Commissioning: The Pittsburgh 2011 Delegate Assembly closed on July 9 with a commissioning service for new moderator Dick Thomas (at podium) and new moderator-elect Elizabeth Soto Albrecht (right). Executive Board member Addie Banks (left) offered the prayer.



Delegates voted with colored cards: Green meant yes, yellow meant caution, and red meant no.

Gil Perez (left) of Kalona, Iowa, and Kaleen Kheshgi, of Bloomington, Ind., were part of the youth worship band. Photo by Anna Groff

Youth build bridges

Youth at Pittsburgh 2011 urged to experience variety of cultures

by Anna Groff

Shane Hipps

Throughout Pittsburgh 2011, youth worship leaders Shé Hall and Derek Yoder challenged the youth to build bridges with others. They encouraged the youth to talk with people who didn't look or act like them and experience the variety of cultures within Mennonite Church USA.

When introducing the We Are the Church Day, Hall said, "We are a diverse people. This is something to be celebrated today and throughout the week."

We Are the Church Day, envisioned by the racial/ethnic constituency groups, recognized the multicultural diversity of Mennonite Church USA.

Every worship service opened with a dance performance, ranging from line dancing by Talashia Keim Yoder and a dance troupe from Goshen, Ind., to stomp from Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, to a traditional batak dance by Indonesian Christian Community Fellowship in Colton, Calif. (see photo on page 23), to modern dance performances by Rwang Pam of Los Angeles Faith Chapel and Hope Goertzen of North Newton, Kan.

The rapper ASON, as in "a son of God," also opened the services with rap and hip hop (see photo on page 24). The worship band, led by Jeremy Kempf, integrated songs in Spanish and other languages with contemporary worship songs, as well as traditional hymns. During the final services, youth gathered at the front of the stage to dance with the music and started conga lines that weaved among the thousands of chairs in the worship space.

Tuesday morning

Shane Hipps, who spoke at the joint worship on July 4, also addressed the youth on July 5. Hipps opened with comedic relief as he taught the youth his very own hip-shaking dance, the "Booty X." Youth were seen performing the dance on escalators, in bathrooms and around the convention center throughout the week.

After his dance, he went on to challenge the youth to see themselves the way God sees them, saying this would "radically change every part of our life and world."

Hipps is a teaching pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. Formerly he served as pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Ariz.

He went on to tell a story about when he visited the lake house of a wealthy man. Hipps saw the man's speedboat and assumed it cost around $100,000. Much to his surprise, he learned that the speedboat is worth over $1 million because it is a "Riva." Only 100 Rivas are made each year, he said.

"When something is rare, the value goes up," he said. "You are uniquely made, and that makes your value infinite."

Hipps told the youth that each of them is one of 6.5 billion people on the earth at this moment.

"There is no one like you," he said. "That means you're one in 6 billion."

Tuesday evening

Actor Ted Swartz shared with youth on July 5 the three elements of "good acting." He also spoke about the suicide of his longtime acting and business partner, Lee Eshleman. Swartz, Harrisonburg, Va., is a comedian, actor and founder of Ted & Co.

The first element of good acting, he said, is to be present in the moment. Second, listen to each other. "As actors, we can tell when our partner's not listening to us," he said. Third, practice empathy.

When these three elements occur, actors call it "swapping molecules," or chemistry.

He added that the three elements of good acting are the same prerequisites for reconciliation, or building bridges.

This worship service combined a message with live drama and a video clip of a skit performed by Swartz and Eshleman. On May 17, 2007, Eshleman died by suicide. He was Swartz's acting partner for 20 years.

Swartz told of the time after Eshleman's death when he was working on a scene of the biblical story of Jacob returning home to Esau to ask forgiveness. The director told Swartz that the scene was not working and asked him to consider what it would be like if Eshleman was Esau and how Swartz would respond.

Swartz said he thought he was being present and listening—the first two elements—but missing the third element in the scene. "I don't think I was honest with my pain, guilt or anger," he told the youth.

Swartz closed his message by performing the scene of Esau forgiving Jacob. He played both parts.

Wednesday morning

Calenthia Dowdy led the youth in proclaiming at the beginning and end of her message, "Let's have a party."

Dowdy's sermon, which kicked off the We Are the Church Day, began with the retelling of the Prodigal Son story. She told the youth she is a "lost daughter."

Dowdy grew up Baptist but said she didn't like the "rules" of the church. At age 18 she wanted to study to become a pastor, but her pastor told her, "You can't be a pastor. You're a woman."

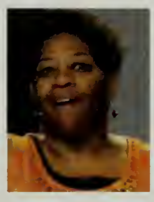
So she took off and moved to Hollywood but had to return home after she spent all her money. Later she heard God tell her, "My daughter, you can do and be anything you want to do and be in me. ... God said to me, 'Let's have a party.'" So Dowdy went to seminary and now is a professor at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa., and attends Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia.

Dowdy said that too often we focus on the younger son's irresponsible actions, so her message focused on the position of God.

"He accepts his son—no questions asked," Dowdy said. However, when God looks at the church today, God says, "My church is a prodigal church. My church is lost," she said.

File photo

Ted Swartz


Calenthia Dowdy

Dancers from the Indonesian Christian Community Fellowship, Colton, Calif., perform a traditional Indonesian dance before youth worship. Photo by Anna Groff

ASON, as in "a son of God," shares a rap with the youth before worship. Photo by Anna Groff

God finds hope in the young people. "To the folks under 40," Dowdy said, "God is calling the church back. ... There is hope in this new generation."

Wednesday evening

David Maldonado told the youth that at one time in his life he "loved" marijuana, cocaine and alcohol. "That was my gig," he said.

When he lived in Louisiana, he smuggled pounds of marijuana into his state from Alabama. When he lived in Miami, women prostituted themselves with his friends for cocaine.

"The day I met the cross of the living Christ, all that had to die," he said. "On Feb. 20, 1990, David Maldonado died and came back to life in Christ."

David Maldonado

His previous addictions enable him to understand the appeal of drugs.

"There was good money in it," he said. "I understand why people sell it. I also understand why they use it."

Maldonado now serves as senior pastor of Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvación in Fort Myers, Fla. He has served this congregation for 17 years with Madeline, his wife. She spoke during the adult worship that day (see page 14).

He challenged the youth that as they enter college and graduate from college, as they look for jobs and hope to make money, they should remember their calling.

"There is no better place than the church of Jesus Christ," he said. "There is no greater call than when Jesus Christ calls you to his service."

Maldonado rephrased the U.S. Army's tagline for youth, "Be all you can be in the Army."

Maldonado said the cross is necessary for transformation. "Every bridge you build, you must build it so people go on that bridge and confront themselves with the cross," he said. Maldonado's message was part of the We Are the Church Day.

Thursday morning

For the worship on Thursday morning, youth listened to a moving story of reconciliation and addiction recovery from a mother and daughter. Names and details will not be published due to the request for anonymity from the mother and daughter.

At the end of the service, youth were invited to anonymously write down brokenness in their lives and place the papers in baskets at the end of the service. The next morning the notes were posted on the stage and several were read aloud.

Friday morning

Jeniffer Dake told the youth on Friday morning that to be ambassadors of Jesus they must get rid of the "dead dogs" in their lives that they are hiding.

Dake, an entertaining and energetic speaker, told the youth a story about a woman in New York City who reluctantly took care of her neighbor's dog while her neighbor went on vacation.

After a few days of feeding and caring for the dog, she found the dog dead in the neighbor's apartment. After panicking, she called the owner, who told her to take the dog to the vet.

The woman, who didn't own a car, realized she had to somehow reach the vet by way of the metro. She found a large suitcase and put the 80-pound dog in it and wheeled it down the steps and down the street to the metro station.

"No one knew she had a dead dog, but she knew it," said Dake to the audience, who was laughing heartily at this point.

At the station, the woman wasn't strong enough to lift the suitcase over the rotating door. A man approached and offered to help her, but when she turned around, he was gone. He thought, This is 80 pounds of " iThings." The woman was scared, then relieved.

"Get that dead dog out of the suitcase," she said. "Let someone like Jesus steal it from you. … It is time for you to get rid of it."

Dake went on to describe the importance of forgiving yourself and forgiving others. She said the convention offers a "launching point that sends you out to grow."

Friday evening

Before Brenda Matthews spoke, the youth ran into the worship space.

"Some of you came in like greased lightning," she said to the audience, many of whom gathered on the floor in front of the stage and cheered for an extended period of time when she took the stage.

Matthews' energy, humor and directness make her one of the most popular youth speakers. She spoke at previous youth conventions but mentioned that this may be her last year.

Matthews, also known as "Mama Brenda," told the youth that to be bridges they need to begin telling their testimonies and victories and showing unconditional love to those around them.

"You can't let your light shine only with your youth group," she said, but also at school and on the street.

She encouraged the youth to strongly consider baptism when they return home. She said that while the Mennonite tradition encourages youth to wait for baptism until they feel ready to make a mature decision, "it's time for you to make a mature decision."

"Don't wait for a perfect moment," she said, sporting a Chicago DOOR T-shirt. "Life is not perfect."

Matthews was introduced to Mennonites through Jonathan and Kristin Friesen through the DOOR program in Chicago. Jonathan now serves as pastor at Ellis Avenue Church in Hyde Park, and he ordained Matthews as the youth pastor.

Matthews also challenged the youth, as ambassadors of Christ, to leave their own communities and "experience the face of God in the city."

"You've got to come out of that safety zone," she said. "It's time for a move … beyond the confines of your church."

Jennifer Dake

Brenda Matthews

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., hosted a trash fashion show on top of the convention center on July 7. Youth designed and modeled most of the outfits, with some help from EMU staff. The winner from the EMU Facebook page was Sophia Mast. She wore "Wa(i)sted Time"—a dress made from *Time* magazines. The staff winner was Rachel Bowman, pictured here.

Photo by Jon Styer

Children collect money for day care

From left: Gloria DeBerg, Drew Smoker, Elizabeth Longacre and Hannah Landis ask for money for the Blough Mennonite Church day care. Photo by Anna Groff

Hannah Landis, 9, and three other girls walked around the convention center on July 8 asking for donations for a day care in Pennsylvania.

The girls, part of the children's convention at Pittsburgh 2011, said they hoped to raise between $50 and $100. They carried a pan and asked people to place money in it.

"Every penny counts," was their motto.

"Yesterday one pan got $110," Landis said.

The donations go to the day care at Blough Mennonite Church Day Care Center, Hollsopple, Pa. The children broke into groups and spread out around the convention. The children raised $1,240.

"We really want to help the day care," said Gloria DeBerg, 8, of Minneapolis.

For more than two decades the center has provided day-care services for the church family and the broader community.—*Anna Groff*

A 'green' convention center

Pittsburgh's is the first "green" convention center in the United States certified with a Gold Leadership Energy and Environmental Design rating.

Over **95 percent** of the original center was recycled by crushing it into useful fill material.

The primary hall space of **236,000 square feet** is **100 percent** naturally lit.

50 percent of the center's new materials was produced within 500 miles of Pittsburgh.

The center uses **100 percent** biodegradable trash-can liners.

During Pittsburgh 2011, approximately **9 tons of trash** was diverted from going to a landfill to being recycled.—*mPress and other sources*

Overheard at the Delegate Assembly

This assembly is free to adopt the rules it wants as long as the rules conform to the rules that are in place.—*Jim Beitler, parliamentarian*

By not allowing you to have a voice, we're giving you a voice.—*Delegate Ron Copeland's "Orwellian" view of what the Executive Board was saying with the Philadelphia Experiment*

Choosing to worship with Mennonites … requires that I make sacrifices in my preferences for style of worship and music, and I have done so every Sunday for the last five years (see page 29).—*Unnamed delegate in a note to the Listening Committee*

Jesus said, "I can't bless mess. I can bless when you are organized."—*Speaker Leslie Francisco III*

We need a Best Buy website for pastors and leaders. Oops, I meant a best practices website.—*Unnamed delegate*

The forthrightness with which you speak to each other so the church can move ahead, this teaches us.—*Pastor Damien Pelende of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Congo*

My law firm may not recognize me next week when I go back to work. I hope there's an office for me.—*Moderator Ed Diller*

Willis Suter is in our table group, and he's built more bridges than anyone else here. He's a dentist. —*Delegate Brent Kauffman*

Junior youth: Be on the side of the cross

Peter Eberly spoke to the junior youth on July 8. He said that on Friday nights he makes pizza and invites others to come to his house to eat and watch Disney movies.

As the audience yelled out the names of movies, Eberly talked about how each movie addresses the question, Who am I?

He called on the junior youth to decide to be on the side of the cross. Then he invited those who wished to come forward to show their commitment to Jesus or to ask for prayer. Some posted notes on a cross to express their confessions.

During the week the junior youth participated in worship, small groups, teambuilding activities and a trip to the Carnegie Science Center. They also spent one day at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center for hiking, swimming, group games and a servant project.—*Gordon Houser*

A girl in the junior youth convention walks across a bridge during a song to show her commitment to Jesus Christ. Photo by Gordon Houser

Conversation rooms help build a strong convention bridge

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

Since a bridge is classified by how the forces of tension, compression and bending are distributed throughout its structure, the Conversation Room discussions at Pittsburgh 2011 helped build a strong churchwide convention.

Seven structured discussions focused on the church in relationship to immigration, abortion, Phoenix 2013, Israel/Palestine, the role of teaching positions/dialogue-discernment, human sexuality and sexual orientation. And though all these—along with two formal open discussions—sparked energy, conviction and passion, the discussions centered on sexuality and sexual orientation drew the larger crowds.

> It provided a space where we could talk about something very difficult without being too guarded.—Joe Troyer

On July 7, more than 300 participants packed out the Conversation Room. David Brubaker, Harrisonburg, Va., one of several Conversation Room facilitators during the convention, helped participants cross swirling waters. The process used guidelines of respectful sharing and safe listening to help the church respond to differing views on sexual orientation in the life of faith.

And what many participants discovered is that the "bridge" of the process held up beneath the weight.

"I thought the Conversation Room facilitated a great process and had real value," said Joe Troyer, the youth pastor at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church in Ohio who attended Thursday's discussion. "It provided a space where we could talk about something very difficult without being too guarded.

"The discussion allowed people to share from their hearts in a way they haven't been able to do before," he said. "I think that's because we all listened to each other and tried to understand our diverse views rather than getting locked into a point-counter point discussion."

It was this respecting atmosphere of the room that meant the most to Anna Beth Roeschley of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church and a part of the Pink Menno movement—an advocacy group for people of all sexual orientations.

The group was asked to hold its activities off-campus because it promotes a view not sanctioned by Mennonite Church USA. But many of its members served as adult delegates and volunteers, attended seminars and worship sessions, participated in informal hymn sings in the convention halls and joined Conversation Room discussions.

"I was surprised by the structure and vibe of the room, said Roeschley after participating in the July 5 discussion on human sexuality, which also drew a large crowd, about 170 participants. "It was better and much safer than I anticipated.

"It was a powerful experience for me to talk with others who have very different views from myself on sexuality. It was really good for me to listen to what they had to say."

Church leaders, including Ed Diller, moderator of Mennonite Church USA, and Richard Thomas, moderator-elect, believe the Conversation Room process is integral to the Anabaptist value of community discernment. And it models where the church is headed in light of the Pittsburgh Experiment in the adult delegate sessions, where no resolutions were brought forth but table discussions and open-microphone time was key.

"I think the Conversation Room was a wonderful addition to our convention," Diller said. "From the reports we are hearing about the Conversation Room, participants by and large felt the process modeled habits of good conversation and good listening and helped the church move toward responding rather than reacting to issues."

Thomas added, "The feedback we are receiving from many adult delegates after their sessions is that they deeply appreciated the time given to healthy conversation that did not have as its goal a final resolution.

"Our delegate session process, as well as the Conversation Room, were a convergence of practice that is helping us walk out our value of growing in our capacity for community discernment, so that together we can better hear the voice of God."

Laurie Oswald Robinson is a freelance writer and the author of Forever Family.

Women identify needs and next steps

by Anna Groff

More than 60 women gathered to create "circles of solidarity" on July 7 at a "Women in Leadership" gathering planned by Joanna Shenk, Janie Beck Kreider and Beth Martin Birky.

Elizabeth Soto, moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA, addressed the group.

"We need to learn to trust our inner authority," she said.

She encouraged women to answer these questions: What are my leadership plans? What are my goals? She also called them to engage the system and serve on boards and committees.

Beth Martin Birky, professor of English and women's studies at Goshen (Ind.) College, said that in women's studies we say, "Our hearts are as important as our heads." In church settings we might say, "Spirits are as important as our heads."

She also described "circles of solidarity" in which those gathered identify an issue and then do collaborative analysis together. She encouraged the women to see the event as a "model to use in others places," she said.

Then women began the practice by breaking into discussion groups based on the following topics: women's stories in Mennonite media, intergenerational mentoring, women's leadership and labels, women and worship, women and bicultural leadership, and leadership and Mennonite education. The women named needs and next steps in these areas.

In the women's stories in Mennonite media group, led by Patty Burdette, *Timbrel* editor, the women discussed how to share stories of pain and hurt—or stories from women leaders that are unresolved and don't have a happy, successful ending.

The women named the need for safe spaces to share these stories, as well as the need for women to submit more stories and articles to Mennonite publications.

Joanna Shenk, associate for interchurch relations and communications for Mennonite Church USA, works with the ongoing women in leadership audit with Martin Birky and Beck Kreider. She said that Mennonite Church USA may coordinate the suggestions that come from this event that are relevant on a national scale.

I do not come from an ethnic Mennonite background, but I have chosen to join the Mennonite church because of a set of values and beliefs that I have come to hold dear. Choosing to worship with Mennonites, however, requires that I make sacrifices in my preferences for style of worship and music and I have done so every Sunday for the last five years. I am so thankful that the C3 worship team was invited to lead us in song this week. As the music began for adult worship on Tuesday, I was engulfed by a lightness of heart I hadn't felt in worship since I can't remember when. Tears of joy streamed down my face as I was encouraged to move to the music, lift my hands to God and sing. I felt free for the first time in a long time. But I also felt cared for. Bringing the C3 team speaks to me as a person of color and a nonethnic Mennonite. It tells me that we can all make sacrifices in our preferences for one another's sake and that making these sacrifices are part of being the church—even with people who are different.—*from a note turned in to the Listening Committee*

MennoNight 5K/10K run draws 600 along river

Almost 600 runners and walkers, many in the bright green shirts given to entrants, took part in the MennoNight 5K/10K Run on July 7. The course followed the Allegheny River on a humid evening. Matt Jones of LaGrange, Ind., won the 5K race in 16:53. Hannah Chappell-Dick of Bluffton, Ohio, was the top female runner in 18:39. In the 10K race, Lillie Koerner of Freeman, S.D., was the top female runner in 42:30. Jacob Landis of Sterling, Ill., won the race in 34:50. Photo by Gordon Houser

Pittsburgh 2011

First-time youth group attendees reflect together after the final worship service. Gary and Sandy Hauseman (at left) are the youth leaders. Photo by Anna Groff

A youth group's first convention

by Anna Groff

The youth group of Hope Community Church, Fleetwood, Pa., embarks on a local or international service trip each summer, but this year they did something different.

The youth group attended a Mennonite convention for the first time in the church's history.

> There are people we'll probably never see again, but they were open to meeting us for the day.—Rachel Kurtz

While the youth admitted they didn't know exactly what to expect, they had a great time, learned a lot and bonded as a group, they said.

Youth Bridget Kurtz said she liked the variety of seminars and the hymn sing. Her favorite speakers were Shane Hipps, Jennifer Dake and David Maldonado. "[Maldonado] was very outgoing," she said.

Youth Stephanie Hartman was surprised there were so many other youth in attendance and didn't realize how far youth traveled to Pittsburgh 2011.

Rachel Kurtz, a youth group member, said, "There are people we'll probably never see again, but they were open to meeting us for the day."

Gary and Sandy Hauseman serve as the youth sponsors. "They all had a really great time," said Sandy. She also said they went to seminars every chance they could.

Sandy said a member of their congregation suggested the youth attend the convention this year, especially since it was in Pennsylvania—their home state. From retreats, area conference gatherings and Bible quizzing, the youth group heard about the conventions from other youth and were curious about the event. Now they can return to Hope Community and share about their experiences.

Fernando feeds the Mennonite multitudes

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

Sandwich shop owner Fernando Decarvalho discovered that tailoring a sandwich menu just for Mennonites was not only welcoming the stranger. It was also amazing marketing.

The proceeds he earned from selling an inexpensive $6 sandwich combo with such names as Naked Anabaptist (tuna), The Blaurock Beef and MC-USA Mesquite Turkey is helping him keep open his doors during these lean economic times.

The Mennonites packing out his shop near the convention center July 4-9 didn't know their business helped him pay three months back rent. They simply felt a whimsical welcome by connecting with the Anabaptist menu—and, of course, saving a buck.

But the pivotal part of the week for Fernando, who became a Christian five years ago, was that because of God's economy, where Jesus can turn a few loaves into many, everyone was filled with what they needed, including himself.

"My friend John Stahl-Wert came in to eat, and I told him I wanted to do something to welcome the Mennonites when they came," he said. "John told me he was a Mennonite and that he and his daughter Emma would help me develop a sandwich menu. As a Christian, I wanted to be welcoming to others. But at the end of the day, I get to keep my shop open a little longer, and the Mennonites were happy, too."

The Anabaptist Menu
Any 6" Sub, Drink & Chips
Only $6
Menno-Mel Italiano
The Blaurock Beef
Naked Anabaptist (Tuna)
German Town Steak & Cheese
The Martyrs Buffalo Chicken
MC-USA Mesquite Turkey
Pastrami N' Swiss
Lancaster Cold Cut Combo
"The Complete Works"
LUNCH & DINNER

Ministry, not marketing, is his main passion, said Fernando, who left his childhood home in Brazil in 1998 to come to America. Most of the employees he hires are ex-convicts who live in halfway houses and need a job to be reintegrated back into society.

He gives them a fair wage but also shares what money can't buy—the riches of Christ's gospel. As a result, many of them have accepted Christ into their lives and are stabilizing spiritually as well as financially.

"After opening my shop 10 years ago, God brought some really needy people into my life—heroin addicts, ex-drug dealers, prostitutes," he said. "But when I became a Christian, my eyes were opened to how God wanted me to turn my business into a ministry.

"I began hiring some of these people. I've even found apartments and furniture and sometimes food. One thing the Lord spoke to me after I was saved was that I needed to lose my life in order to gain it. That's when my business became his."

And the sandwich shop owner discovered that by feeding the Mennonite multitudes, everyone received a blessing—owner and customer alike.

Among Mennonite customers was Janet Regier, youth group leader for First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

"The members of our group didn't buy the convention meal plan, and so it was an accessible and affordable option for us," Regier said.

Fernando's wasn't all about sandwiches. A spirit of love seemed to permeate the fast-paced, peopled-out little place. And this spirit was captured by the guy behind the cash register—Fernando himself—smiling, joking with the repeat customers, grateful to God and to the Mennonites for the overflow of business.

When asked if he saw some similarity in his welcome with the Anabaptist value of welcoming the stranger, the shop owner, a member of an Assembly of God congregation, said: "I don't think a welcoming attitude is about being Mennonite or anything else. Love and welcome is always a biblical thing. If you read your Bible, if you follow Christ, you will always find love."

Fernando Decarvalho (center), sandwich shop owner in downtown Pittsburgh, poses with Mennonite customers Ken Rodgers, Hesston, Kan., and Louise Wideman, Bluffton, Ohio, from the Anabaptist sandwich special menu he created especially for Pittsburgh 2011 conventiongoers. Photo by Laurie Oswald Robinson

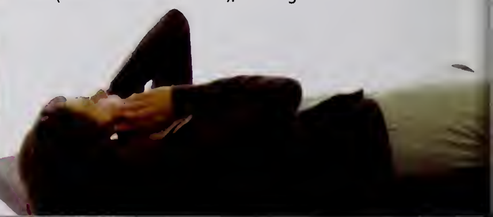
Lord, You are good and
Your mercy endureth forever (2x)

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

BRIDGES TO

Images from Pittsburgh 2011

Clockwise from upper left (with credits): a cameraman films the Calvary Community Church C3 Worship Team (Everett Thomas); the exhibit hall, where various groups met participants and talked about their ministries (Gordon Houser); a flash mob by Goshen (Ind.) College students in the hallway on July 8 (Anna Groff); a list of rules in a conversation room (Laurie Oswald Robinson); a little girl explores her wa
tiongoer recli
don Houser);
daughter Mir
wald Robinso
quilted piece
women artisa



AMBS

inside this issue

2 2011 graduates

6 Graduates urged to share inheritance with others

Two new faculty members

7 Kropf retires after 25 years

Your gifts at work

8 Panorama

Summer 2011
Volume 21 Issue 3

AMBS window

Lots of surprises

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

I have often been surprised this year. Surprised by the quality of the people at AMBS, and how much fun it is to work with them. Surprised by the vast network of friends who believe in AMBS's mission. Surprised by the many alumni who tell me how transformative their experience at AMBS was. Surprised by how much I love this work (having been amply warned that I must still be in the honeymoon phase). Surprised by the beauty of northern Indiana (though now you all think I'm kidding—but I stand as witness yet again today after a 20-mile bike ride on the Pumpkinvine trail). Above all, I've been surprised by AMBS students who over and over again inspire the community with their spirited readiness to lead us into a hope-filled future.

One of the delights of spring semester is that chapels often include seniors reflecting back over their years of study at AMBS. The stories I heard this year were about surprising discoveries, profound learning and confirmation of giftedness for leadership.

Nathan remembered being surprised that when he left for seminary, his father didn't give him a speech about working hard or making the most of an opportunity that many Christians in the world don't have. Instead, his father told him "to seek God's transcendence."

In his chapel talk, Nathan acknowledged not really knowing then what that meant. But the formation that happened for him in his three years at AMBS has given him glimpses of what transcendence means.

Carrie remembered being surprised by the revelatory word a visiting pastor spoke that resonated with her own sense of calling: "I am a pastor, because I can't not be a pastor." After having left another career to prepare for pastoral ministry, Carrie realized with a deep sense of rightness that she is an advocate for children's nurture and a storyteller because she simply cannot be any other way.

This year has been rewarding in many ways. We've hired two exciting new faculty, begun to renovate our beloved chapel, fully endowed our first faculty chair in Missional Leadership, hosted several outstanding conferences and much more.

But what brings me the most joy is seeing our graduates provide leadership as theologically articulate, scripturally grounded, prayerful practitioners of the transcendent good news of Jesus Christ. And the surprise is that I can't imagine any work that would be more fulfilling than serving the church in this learning community, with its Anabaptist vision and resolve to educate leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world. ●

AMBS Window is a publication of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary ~ www.ambs.edu

Twenty-eight graduates honored at commencement

Twenty-eight graduates were honored at the AMBS commencement service on May 21, 2011. They received the following degrees:

MDiv Master of Divinity
MAPS Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS Master of Arts:Theological Studies
MACF Master of Arts in Christian Formation

Fridbert August *MDiv with concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Pastor of IEMAV (Igreja Evangélica Menonita Água Verde) in Curitiba, Brazil. Fridbert and Monica Heinrichs August, his wife, are the parents of two children.

Amanda Beachy *MDiv.* Will join the pastoral team at Washington Mennonite Church, Washington, Iowa. Currently she is a member of Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church, and her parents are Merle and Marlinda Beachy of Kalona.

Alicia Buhler *MDiv with a concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Will complete an advanced practicum in chaplaincy and pastoral counseling and foundational training and a practicum in Gestalt Pastoral Care before moving back to Canada to pursue an assignment in spiritual care. Alicia is a member of Pineridge Fellowship Chapel, Hudson Bay, Sask., a congregation in the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. Her parents are Fred and Irene Buhler of Hudson Bay.

Raymond Epp *MAPS.* Director of Menno Village Naganuma in Hokkaido, Japan, and instructor at Rakuno Gakuen University. Ray and Akiko Aratani, his wife, are Mission Associates with Mennonite Mission Network. They have four children. He is a member of Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Anton Froese *MDiv.* Pastor of Tres Palmas Evangelical Mennonite Church in Paraguay. Tony and Marisa, his wife, have three children. His parents are Peter and Nety Froese of Steinbach, Man.

Virginia Gerbrandt *MDiv.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Virginia is a member of North Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont. Her parents are Esther and Gerald Gerbrandt of Winnipeg, Man. She also is the granddaughter of an AMBS graduate, Henry Gerbrandt.

Jonathan Gerig Meyer *MATS in theology and ethics.* Jonny is adjunct professor of philosophy at Goshen College,

Amanda Beachy, Alicia Buhler, Virginia Gerbrandt, Jonathan Gerig Meyer, Sandra Groeltz. Not pictured: Fridbert August, Raymond Epp

Goshen, Ind., and he works with OddBird, a web development firm. In the future he anticipates doctoral studies in ethics. He is married to Hannah Gerig Meyer and is a member of Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. He is the son of Rich Meyer and Brenda Hostetler Meyer, a graduate of AMBS, and the grandson of Marian and Darrell Hostetler, also an AMBS graduate.

Sandra Groeltz *MDiv with a concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Pursuing a Clinical Pastoral Education placement for 2011–2012. Sandie attends Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Elkhart. She has one daughter.

Scott Janzen *MDiv with a concentration in theological studies.* Exploring opportunities to serve in higher education. He is married to Christa Janzen is a member of Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Christine Kampen *MACF with a concentration in Christian spirituality.* Christine is a half-time pastor of Highland Community (MB) Church in Abbotsford, B.C. She is the daughter of John and Betty Kampen of Abbotsford.

Christine Holsopple Kauffman *MACF with a concentration in Christian spirituality.* Will work in the area of spiritual direction and explore assignments involving health and ministry. She is married to Jeff Kauffman and they have two sons. She is a member of East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Justin King *MATS with a concentration in biblical studies.* Justin is a member of Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio. His parents are James and Darlene King of Archbold.

Ryan Lumley *MATS with a concentra-tion in biblical studies.* Ryan is a member of Church of Faith in God, and his parents are Scott Lumley and Annette Robertson of Charlotte, Mich.

Carrie Martens *MDiv.* Has been invited to co-teach the AMBS course Human Development and Christian Formation and will volunteer at Belmont Mennonite Church in the area of Christian formation. In December Carrie will return to Canada to pursue a pastoral ministry placement. Carrie is a member of Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona, Man. Her parents are Rudy and Edna Martens of Altona.

Rosanna McFadden *MDiv.* Serves part-time as a member of the pastoral team at Creekside Church of the Brethren in Elkhart, Ind. She is married to Tim McFadden and they have three children.

Beth Miller *MDiv with a concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Will complete an extended program of Clinical Pastoral Education at Genesis Hospital in Davenport, Iowa. Beth and Marcus Miller, her husband, have two adult children. She is a member of Kalona Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Scott Janzen, Christine Holsopple Kauffman, Justin King, Carrie Martens, Rosanna McFadden, Beth Miller. Not pictured: Christine Kampen, Ryan Lumley

2011 Graduates

Sun Ju Moon *MDiv with concentration in biblical studies* Sun Ju will participate in Dong San Korean Methodist Church as youth pastor for one year. She and Dong Ju Park, her husband, have two daughters. Her parents are Chang Yong Moon and Eun Sook Shin of Wonju, Kangwon in South Korea.

Rachel Nolt *MDiv.* Rachel is married to Steven Nolt and they have two daughters. She is a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Matthew Pflederer *MDiv.* Pursuing a ministry assignment. He is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen Ind. His parents are Robert and Lorraine Pflederer of Goshen.

Nathan Ramer *MDiv.* Will serve as pastor of Wellman Mennonite Church, Wellman, Iowa. Nathan is married to Erin Ramer and he is a member of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan.

Jeffrey Reese *MACF with a concentration in Christian spirituality.* Will continue as pastor of Hope United Methodist Church of Edwardsburg, Mich., a position he has had for 18 years. Jeffrey and Carin, his wife, have two children.

Miles Reimer *MDiv.* Will continue as associate pastor of First Mennonite Church of Hutchinson, Kan. He is married to Kathy Landis and is the son of Marie and Peter Reimer of Winnipeg, Man.

J Andre Shenk *MDiv with a concentration in theological studies.* Exploring work for a variety of non-profit organizations. Andre is a member of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Lancaster, Pa., and his parents are Juanita and Jonathan Barter of Branchport, N.Y.; and Elvin and Jonelle Shenk of Lancaster.

Jeremy Shue *MDiv with concentration in mission and evangelism.* Serves part-time as Minister of Outreach at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and is pursuing opportunities that will combine business and ministry. He is married to Laura Shue.

Sarah Thompson *MDiv.* Will do a summer internship with Pace e Bene through the Beatitudes Society and in August will begin a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in East Jerusalem, Israel/Palestine, working with Sabeel, a Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center as a research assistant. Sarah is a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., and her parents are George and Karen Thompson of Auburn Hills, Mich.

Mark Tiessen-Dyck *MDiv.* Mark is married to Melissa Tiessen-Dyck and is a member of Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. His parents are Esther and Dan Epp-Tiessen of Winnipeg.

Jim Tormey *MDiv.* Will be pastor of Seminary United Methodist Church, Roanoke, Ind. Jim is married to Kathy Tormey and they have three children. He is a member of Goshen First United Methodist Church, Goshen, Ind.

Joshua Weaver *MATS in theology and ethics.* Will continue as a research consultant with Fourth Freedom Forum in Goshen, Ind. Josh is married to Julia Gingrich. Previously he was a member of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, and now is a member of Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart. ●

SunJu Moon, Rachel Nolt, Matthew Pflederer, Nathan Ramer, Miles Reimer, Andre Shenk. Not pictured: Jeffrey Reese.

Faculty gives awards to graduates

AMBS faculty select students to receive special awards, presenting these at the Dean's Breakfast the day before commencement. This year's awards are as follows:

Alicia Buhler: Certificate for excellence in pastoral care and counseling

Scott Janzen: Millard Lind award for excellence in Old Testament interpretation

Justin King: Perry B. Yoder award for excellence in Hebrew exegesis

Carrie Martens: Certificate for excellence in Christian formation in work with children

Rosanna McFadden: Certificate for excellence in Christian formation dedicated to worship and the arts

Jonny Gerig Meyer: John Howard Yoder award for excellence in peace studies

SunJu Moon: Gertrude Roten award for excellence in Greek exegesis

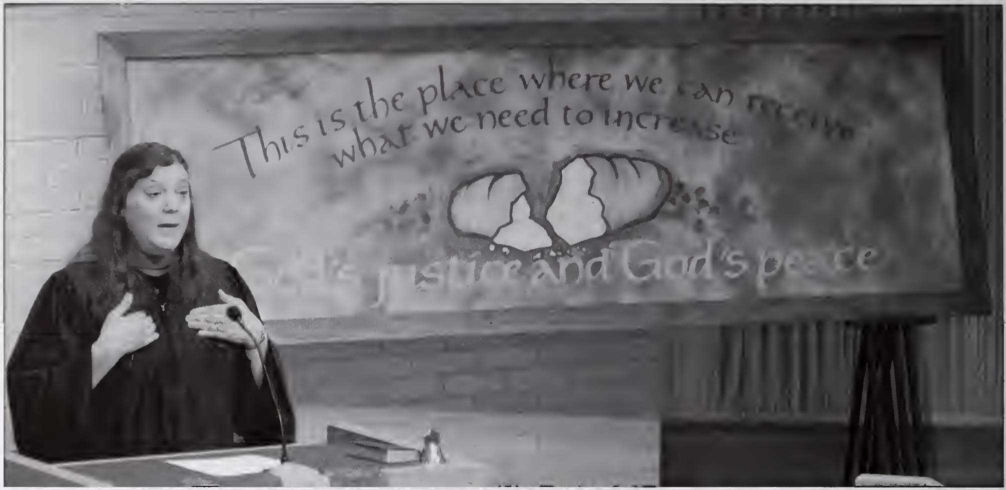
Jeremy Shue: Certificate for excellence in vision and leadership for missional vision of the church

Sarah Thompson: Marlin E. Miller award for creative work in theological studies

Mark Tiessen-Dyck: Willard M. Swartley award for excellence in New Testament interpretation ●

Sun Ju Moon receives a certificate for excellence from AMBS Professor Ben Ollenburger.

Jeremy Shue, Sarah Thompson, Mark Tiessen-Dyck, Jim Tormey, Joshua Weaver.


This is the place where we can receive what we need to increase
God's justice and God's peace

Artwork commissioned by the graduating class and created by graduate Rosanna McFadden provided a backdrop for the AMBS commencement service on May 21. Speaker Heidi Neumark, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, New York, gave the commencement address.

Graduates urged to share their inheritance with others

With the words "God's justice and God's peace" from the first hymn in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* as a backdrop for the commencement service on May 21, speaker Heidi Neumark began her address with a well-known Old Testament story of injustice.

Dr. Neumark, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, New York, used the story from I Kings of King Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard as a starting point. "You have labored in a vineyard and come from a long heritage with deep roots," she said.

The Lutheran pastor insisted, "The fruits we produce are not Mennonite grapes and Lutheran grapes packaged for our own constituencies. You have received your inheritance for others, for the sake of shalom in the world."

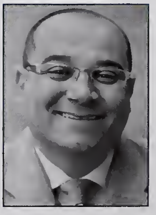
Recounting also how God directed the prophet Ezekiel to confront Ahab for the murder of Naboth, Neumark said, "You will be called on to go down and confront injustice. You will be called on to be sure the church is not annexed onto the status quo … to go down to those who are suffering and even those causing pain."

The author of *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*, a book used in several AMBS classes, concluded with a reminder from John 15, quoting the verses in which Jesus says that he is the vine and those who remain in him will bear fruit.

The painting that served as a backdrop for the commencement service at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, was commissioned by the graduating class as a gift to the seminary. It was created by Rosanna McFadden, an artist who is a member of the class and a pastor at Creekside Church of the Brethren in Elkhart.

For more photos and a fuller story of commencement, visit **www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/news/commencement-2011** ●

Two new faculty members appointed



Safwat Marzouk and Allan Rudy-Froese will join the AMBS faculty this summer.

Safwat, who is completing Ph.D. studies at Princeton this summer, will teach Old Testament. He holds a Master of Divinity from Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt. In addition to completing doctoral studies, he is serving part-time as pastor with the Arabic American Evangelical Church in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Allan, a 1992 Master of Divinity graduate of AMBS, is a Ph.D. candidate at Emmanuel College, Toronto (Ont.) School of Theology. Allan will teach preaching and public communication, including biblical storytelling and missional preaching. He has been a pastor of Mennonite congregations in Manitoba and Ontario, has led workshops for preachers in several locations in Canada and writes a monthly column on preaching in *Canadian Mennonite*. ●

Kropf retires after 25 years of teaching

When Marlene Kropf started school, she came home every day and taught her younger sister what she had learned. She already had an "impulse to tell someone else what I was finding exciting," Marlene said.

That love of both learning and teaching has continued through Marlene's life. She taught high school English first in public schools in Portland, Ore. Then she and Stanley, her husband, went to Jamaica with Mennonite Central Committee where she taught for two years.

"The most significant turning point in my life was the years in Jamaica," Marlene said. She described living with fear at a violent time in Kingston. "I found myself without intellectual or spiritual resources to cope with everyday debilitating violence. I didn't know how to pray."

When they returned to Portland, Marlene searched for resources to help her. Marcus Smucker, later a professor at AMBS, was her pastor and had begun groups in the congregation for spiritual direction and growth. Marlene joined one of these.

Then Marlene attended a silent retreat led by Mary Herr, a spiritual director and co-founder with her husband, Gene, of the Hermitage near Three Rivers, Mich. "God met me in that silence in a vivid and personal way that I had seldom experienced," Marlene remembered. "I was astonished how present God was."

Following this, Marlene committed herself to praying through the Psalms, making each one very personal. That took two years, but "the Psalms had become mine. The intimate relationship the Psalmist had with God had become mine, too."

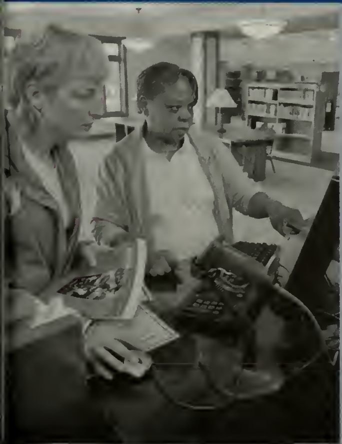
When she and Stan moved to Elkhart, in part to accept assignments with the Mennonite Church, Marlene began studying at AMBS. Very quickly she moved into seminary teaching.

Marlene combined her AMBS teaching with work for the denomination, first with Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, then Mennonite Church USA. She has led workshops and retreats in all Mennonite Church Canada area churches and all but one Mennonite Church USA area conference.

As her formal teaching career ends, Marlene reflected that seeing students flourish is the greatest reward, especially seeing "a student find a pathway to God that is illuminating to them."

At a celebration in Marlene's honor, Rebecca Slough, academic dean, noted Marlene's contribution in organizing the ministry of spiritual direction at AMBS, in which one-fourth of the students each year participate. Rebecca also pointed out the unique weaving together of preaching and worship in her teaching and in the book *Preparing Sunday Dinner: A collaborative approach to worship and preaching*, coauthored by Marlene, June Alliman Yoder and Rebecca (Herald Press, 2006).

In retirement, Marlene is looking forward to living a more contemplative life and to being closer to family members after she and Stan return to the northwest. However, she wonders, "What am I going to do with what I keep learning? Teaching has been an integrating experience, so how will I keep integrating what I'm learning?" ●



Your gifts at work

Each year, the AMBS library acquires around 800 books and renews approximately 420 journal subscriptions. The collection encompasses several thousand audiovisual items and an increasing number of digital multimedia items along with more than 115,000 volumes and the journals.

Your contributions help to fund the $80,000 annual budget for acquisitions, including online databases and electronic resources. These are essential for keeping current with worldwide scholarship that has an impact on Mennonite faith and practices.

Thank you for your gifts that continue to make the collection one of the best for Mennonite and Anabaptist perspectives on ministry, biblical studies, history, theology, and peace and justice studies. This serves not only students, but also community borrowers and online patrons throughout the church. ●

AMBS

Summer 2011
Volume 21 Issue 3

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

Keep in touch with AMBS

AMBS Calendar
www.ambs.edu/calendars/events
Facebook
www.facebook.com/followAMBS
iTunesU
www.ambs.edu/iTunesU

A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

panorama

Pastors Week 2012

Loren Johns, Ph.D., professor of New Testament, will be the featured speaker at Pastors Week, Jan. 23–26, 2012, working with the book of Revelation. Visit **www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek** for updates.

Two new online courses this fall

Faith, Film and Fiction, taught online by Gayle Gerber Koontz this fall, gives opportunities to discuss issues of how faith is portrayed in our current culture. More information at **www.ambs.edu/faith-film-fiction**

Social Theory for Christian Peacemakers, taught online by Gerald Shenk, will bring life experience and direct observations from the frontlines of activism into conversation with the theological convictions that inform public witness. More information online: **www.ambs.edu/social-theory-peacemaking**

Weekend classes this fall

If you are able to come to the AMBS campus for weekends during the fall, consider enrolling in a weekend class:

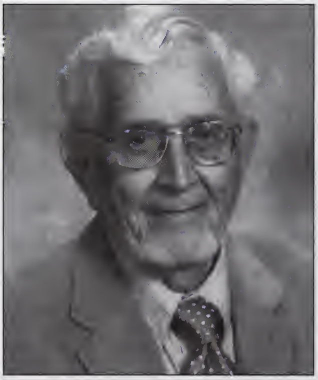
- Mennonites in Mission
- Anabaptist History and Theology
- Creation Care: Theology, Ethics and Spirituality
- Conflict, Communication, and Conciliation

For specific dates and times, visit **www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/fall**

Mission lectureship in October

A celebration of the completion of the Global Mennonite History project will coincide with the bienniel Shenk Mission Lectureship at AMBS, October 27–29. The event includes discussion sessions, evening celebrations and a banquet featuring missiologist Jonathan Bonk. A fall weekend course—Mennonites in Mission—will draw on this conference. For information, visit **www.ambs.edu/mission-lectureship** ●

David L. Habegger receives 2011 award



David L. Habegger, whose contributions to the church include congregational and conference ministry and denominational service, has received the 2011 Alumni Ministry and Service Award from AMBS.

Beginning pastoral ministry in 1946, David served as pastor of congregations in California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. He is a visionary leader who was in on the beginnings of a number of ministries, such as Mennonite Church of the Servant and Churches United for Peacemaking in Wichita, Kan.; and Church Community Services and Samaritan Center in Elkhart, Ind. He served on committees for most of the U.S. regional conferences of the GCMC—Pacific, Western, Central and Eastern, in addition to serving on a South Central (MC) missions committee. He began attending GCMC denominational gatherings in 1941 and was a delegate to all sessions from 1953 to 2001.

David has visited all 50 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces, pursued genealogical research in Europe and led tours to Europe and the Middle East.

In 1949, David earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago. Later, he also earned an M.A. from Northwestern/Garrett Theological Seminary and a Rel.D. from Claremont School of Theology.

David now lives in North Newton, Kan., moving there from Newton after the death of LaVeta, his wife, in 2008. He is actively involved in deacon and visitation ministry with Bethel College Mennonite Church.

David will be honored at the Western District Conference sessions in North Newton, Kan., in late July.

AMBS names one or two graduates each year to receive the Alumni Ministry and Service Award, recognizing either long-term service in or significant contributions to the church. ●

Everence
ART HERE
HESSTON COLLEGE
CMM
CMM

CROSS

ttle (Gordon Houser); a conven-
nd talks on her cell phone (Gor-
Castro, San Antonio, and her
, take in an activity (Laurie Os-
e women work on one of four
ioned off on July 7 to support
the Congo (Gordon Houser).

Respect Agreement
Show respect
Minimize interruptions
Be interested and curious
Listen to understand, not persuade
Be willing to summarize other's perspectives
Speak for yourself
All others to speak

United in and through Jesus Christ

Dick Thomas became moderator of Mennonite Church USA at Pittsburgh 2011 last month after serving as moderator-elect for two years.

Mennonite Church USA is my spiritual home. I love this church that has nurtured, challenged and frustrated me and invited me to grow as a Christian. It has been my privilege to visit with congregations from the African Community Church of Lancaster, Pa.; to Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan.; Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla.; Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.; Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church and many others. All these communities have helped build my connection to this family of faith.

Congregations that have been regular homes for me are Living Light Mennonite Church in Lancaster Conference—where my spiritual journey began—as well as University Mennonite Church in Allegheny Conference. At University Mennonite I found the love, acceptance and tolerance that I needed to come home again to Jesus' way of peace and justice. In that setting, where it was OK to explore different ways of understanding the Bible, I found a safe place for my questioning and searching. Here I experienced unity through Jesus, the essential center, in other things liberty and in all things love.

Biblical unity is not based on agreement on the issues of the day but by our common confession that Jesus is Savior and Lord.

Following college, Living Light Mennonite became home again, and it remained so for Joyce, my wife, and our family for a number of years. It was a congregation that was changing from a rules-centered understanding of faith to one centered in Christ. I recall the pastor saying many times, "Cling tightly to Christ and in all else be flexible."

Our current congregation is Ridgeview Mennonite Church in the Atlantic Coast Conference. For me, it has been encouraging to see how the congregation has grown in appreciation for the whole of Mennonite Church USA; it has called pastors from Atlantic Coast, Franconia, Lancaster and Central District conferences. After conflict over a theological issue several years ago, the Ridgeview body is now developing as a Christ-centered community shaped by Anabaptism.

In our Mennonite church polity, the local congregation is the central unit in the life of the church; the role of our area conferences and our national conference is "to develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures" (in the words of our purpose statement). Thus considerable discernment happens in the congregation. The three congregations that I have participated in have—through discernment—changed considerably. For example, today Audrey Kanagy is a pastor at Living Light—which would have been unthinkable when I was a youth and all leaders were men.

Collectively, these congregations have taught me that we are only united in and through Jesus Christ. However, we live in divisive times in a polarized culture where we are tempted to conform to the cultural divides.

In this cultural setting, congregations and denominations are separating into groups based on common beliefs and agreement on specific issues. This may be appropriate for political parties and clubs but not for the church. The congregations that have shaped me have taught that biblical unity is not based on agreement on the issues of the day but by our common confession that Jesus is Savior and Lord. They also have taught that when discerning the shape of faithfulness, it is important to give and receive counsel, gather around Scripture in the presence of the Holy Spirit and let discernment take considerable time.

A wise church leader said, "It is more important that we think together than that we think alike." Thinking together means we listen to each other—especially to those we may disagree with—the way we want God to listen to our prayers. It means we will discern together the mind of Christ even when discernment needs to happen over extended periods of time. And as we learn to agree and disagree in love, it means we will be committed to each other and give appropriate freedom for local congregational discernment in our different locations and congregations.

My prayer for our future in Mennonite Church USA is that we will trust each other as sibling congregations in one body, even as our application of the one gospel differs from congregation to congregation based on Spirit-led discernment. When we live with a grace-filled, Christ-centered approach, we will flourish as God's healing and hope flow through us into the world that God loves. TM

Real people in real relationships

Zora Neale Hurston is one of my favorite writers. Hurston, whom many encounter in high school when assigned her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, studied, talked to and wrote about the people she loved—regular black people. Trained in anthropology, Hurston was a consummate folklorist, and the black community was where she did her fieldwork. To the chagrin of some of her contemporaries, Hurston's characters are genuine, honest and brash. Another favorite is Raymond Carver, whose characters, many of them marginalized, often suffer devastating losses.

Hurston and Carver, although separated by gender, race and generation, similarly wrote in an unvarnished way about real people and their struggles to be in relationship with each other. The most vulnerable, messed up people have the reader pulling for them because they are so achingly real. Real people, trying to get it right. Trying as best they can to be in relationship with each other.

> Families are bound by shared history, the stories we tell and the stories we make when we come together.

When I was a child, our family regularly made trips south to visit family. These informal family reunions gave me the opportunity to spend time with relatives I didn't know well and, frankly, sometimes didn't know what to make of. I was shy among all these gregarious cousins, aunts and uncles. Many of these extended family members lived in the same neighborhood and seemed to move indiscriminately from house to house. It took me a while to sort out who actually lived where, who "belonged" to whom. For me, the outsider, the norms and rules were a code I had to crack so that I could understand how the whole thing worked. It usually took a couple of days for me to get in sync with the rhythm of this large family, with their loud laughter and easy familiarity with one another. I struggled to figure out ways of fitting in. Eventually I learned that it was OK to be me at these family gatherings. Yes, I was quieter than my cousins, probably had my nose stuck in a book too much, but I was part of the family nonetheless. And eventually I learned that it was not so much a matter of me not fitting in but that families are units made up of people trying as best they can to be in relationship with each other. Sometimes the struggles are trivial and easily overlooked. Sometimes they fracture. Sometimes they sever.

Families are made by more than mere bloodlines; they are bound by shared history, the stories we tell and the stories we make when we come together. They are made when we say we belong to one another, in all of our mess and vulnerability.

Week after week in our churches, we gather together, sharing a common story, making new stories, building a history. Every couple of years, we have a big family reunion, where many gather to do the business of the church. Much more than business happens, though. People reconnect with people not seen in a while or make new connections. Stories are shared, milestones are celebrated, losses are mourned. The gathered church considers and names the reasons we come together, the reasons we belong to one another.

In Pittsburgh, our church celebrated We Are the Church Day. It was a special day set aside to think about the ways Mennonite Church USA is becoming more and more racially and ethnically diverse. We had the opportunity to learn the name of Maggie Leonard, a 17-year-old half-Arapaho who in 1888 became the first non-Anglo in the United States to become a Mennonite, how African-American growth in the Mennonite church mushroomed during the late 1950s and how 60 Hispanic Mennonite women founded Sociedad de Damas Cristianos en Acción in 1973. We learned in many ways how we have become who we are today.

There is still much to learn, and along with our celebrations we also mourn our losses. And we keep figuring out how to do this thing called family. It is not simply that we have come together. It is also the way we welcome and acknowledge one another. It is the way we discover the ways we are similar and the ways we are different. It is learning how to make room and tell our stories, as genuinely, honestly and brashly as possible.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

My ancestors were illegal immigrants

J. Nelson Kraybill is lead pastor at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind.

Mishawaka, Wawasee, Shipshewana, Topeka, Dowagiac, Pokagon ... the very place names in the region where I live bear witness to native peoples who were dispossessed of their land almost two centuries ago by my forebears. Removal of Indians from Indiana perhaps was not as brutal as elsewhere, but the original inhabitants faced an impossible choice: accept the white man's treaties or be forcibly expelled. In 1838, Potawatomi people who did not sign the treaties had their homes and crops burned. A federal militia then force-marched them 660 miles from Indiana to Kansas—a journey they remember as the Trail of Death.

Because my ancestors were Mennonite and pacifist, they were not part of the militia that removed or killed native peoples. But my forebears in Pennsylvania and Indiana were poised to move in and homestead as soon as others had cleared the way. From the perspective of native peoples who once inhabited much of North America, invading Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries were illegal immigrants.

Now, centuries later, bills designed to make life difficult for today's immigrants have appeared in some 30 state legislatures. The proposed or approved laws aim to put penalties on companies that hire undocumented workers. They eliminate use of Spanish from certain government communication and give police added power to demand documentation from people they suspect of not having legal status. The bills add threats of imprisonment or fines.

Proponents of such legislation might consider these questions:

- How fluent are you in Potawatomi, Navajo, Algonquian or any other native language of your region? I find no evidence that my ancestors in Lancaster, Pa., learned to speak Susquehannock. Can I demand of today's immigrants what my forebears did not do?
- Where are your papers from native peoples showing that you have a right to live where you do? My ancestors in Pennsylvania had permission to homestead on land granted to them by William Penn, who received territory that the British Empire took from native peoples by force. What right did a European power have to give away land on another continent that native tribes had inhabited for centuries?
- If your forebears settled on land taken by force, why be hostile to today's immigrants who arrive peacefully to seek employment and opportunity? The first European immigrants often slaughtered or deported native peoples. Today's immigrants simply want to work in our factories, start businesses and get education for their children.

Two years ago I spent a month in Guatemala studying Spanish, graciously hosted at a humble home in Quetzaltenango. The family was so poor the refrigerator often was empty. A son-in-law of the household was working undocumented at a restaurant in New York City. He had a wife and child in Guatemala and had been gone for three years. But when he returned to Guatemala shortly after I left, he brought home enough money to build a house for his family. All he wanted was the same thing that I and millions of others want for our families: decent housing, enough food, opportunity.

The Law of Moses instructed ancient Jews: "You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens. ... Remember that you were a slave in Egypt" (Deuteronomy 24:14, 18). Jesus told of a future day when some people will hear him say, "I was hungry and you gave me food. ... I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

Every time an ATM machine asks me if I want English or Spanish, I rejoice that someone in my community is showing hospitality to strangers and newcomers. I believe schools and government should do the same. I have been a stranger in a foreign land.

Every time a new Mexican or Korean restaurant opens nearby, I celebrate the culinary diversity it brings to my home area. Northern Indiana is a more culturally rich place than it used to be, and recent immigrants have helped make that happen. I am glad they are here.

There are no easy answers to immigration issues. But the laws now before many state legislatures have a punitive and vindictive spirit. I protest and will do everything possible to welcome and receive people of other languages and nations who come here to seek a better life, to live in a land where my forebears arrived as illegal immigrants. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship launches

Mennonite Nurses Association and Mennonite Medical Association merge.

Dottie Kauffmann

Members of a professional organization for Mennonite physicians and nurses light candles to acknowledge a combined century-and-a-half of history. From left around the candles are Don Martin, Nathan and Rochele Beachy, and Betsy Moyer, Green Lane, Pa.

When Kristen Metzler-Wilson of Nelsonville, Ohio, arrived at the annual convention of Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association, her name tag designation, "Guest," reflected how she felt—like a stranger.

But by the end of the weekend she was able to say she was now "a member of the family"—a new one formed by the official dissolution of the two organizations (each with almost 70 years of history) and the birth of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship.

Metzler-Wilson, a physical therapist who teaches and does research at Ohio University, is one of five members of the new organization's steering committee. "I'm unique in not [coming here as] a member of either MMA or MNA. Though I appreciate both, I am glad to be part of something new—a faith-based group of people with similar interests, such as health-care access equality in this country and across the world."

The convention, which took place June 23-26 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., represented the culmination of more than four years of work that began in earnest when MMA president at the time, Dan Nafziger of Goshen, Ind., took on a goal of "making the organization more inclusive" of health-care professionals other than physicians and found a kindred spirit in Sondra Leatherman, Hesston, Kan., then president of MNA.

At the joint convention in Colorado in 2008, with input from membership, the two executive committees appointed an implementation team to explore what it would mean—from legal, professional and other aspects—to form one organization. The implementation team subsequently hired consultant Jone Friesen of Tulsa, Okla., to coordinate the process, on which she reported in depth at the 2010 convention in Williamsburg, Va.

The 2011 convention, with the theme "You Make All Things New," began with a time of celebrating, as well as mourning the loss of, the two professional organizations. They were created independently of each other in 1942 (MNA) and 1944 (MMA), in a United States involved in World War II and amid the implications that held for the Anabaptist peace position.

Ervin Stutzman, Harrisonburg, Va., executive director of Mennonite Church USA, spoke in two plenary sessions. He called himself both "cheerleader" and "coach" for the new organization.

The weekend included an introduction to the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship steering committee, which will serve until the MHF membership elects an executive committee. In addition to Metzler-Wilson, steering committee members are Don Carufel-Wert, a physician who teaches in the family medicine residency program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and also practices at an inner-city clinic; Rachel Clemmer Charles, a nurse from Lancaster, Pa.; Nancy Martin, Lancaster, a retired nurse educator with extensive overseas experience; and Stan Reedy, Ypsilanti, Mich., a retired public health physician and steering committee chair.

The steering committee introduced some aspects of the new MHF, such as its values statements (which build on the one MNA adopted some years ago); a proposed dues structure and date for the first MHF convention in 2012 (later confirmed for June 29-July 1 at Laurelville); and its new website, which is currently its major public presence, at mennhealth.org. It continues its search for an executive director for the organization.—*Melanie Zuercher*

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship mission statement:

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship is an interdisciplinary community of Anabaptist health professionals that seeks to nurture the integration of faith and practice, provide opportunities for dialogue on health-related issues and address specific needs through education, advocacy and service.

Volunteer energized by recreation

Longtime volunteer Cindy Bontrager Hawkins passes responsibilities to niece

Everett Thomas

BOARD GAMES
ARTS AND CRAFTS

Since Orlando 1997—missing only the Atlanta 2003 and Charlotte 2005 conventions—volunteer Cindy Bontrager Hawkins of Middlebury, Ind., has planned, set up and run the Mennonite Church USA convention's recreation hall, where thousands of convention attenders can get their bodies moving after sitting through worship, delegate sessions and seminars.

The space is often filled with youth playing basketball, volleyball, Ping-Pong, foursquare and whatever games and activities Hawkins has added to the year's array.

"I'm energized by seeing things come together and making it look like it's not a lot of work," Hawkins said in July.

Convention planners rely on volunteers like Hawkins who are willing to take initiative and coordinate particular sections of the six-day event.

"With a staff of four, we cannot do everything ourselves," said convention planning office manager Scott Hartman during the July 4-9 event. "Volunteers are empowered to step up and lead in their particular area. Cindy is free to design the recreation area as she desires. I'm here to help her when she has questions or needs another opinion."

"Volunteers are at the core of each area of convention," said Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of convention planning, noting that more than 250 full-time volunteers and more than 200 part-time volunteers help keep costs lower for conventiongoers. "Our volunteers are nothing short of miracle workers, and we could not even think about doing convention without them."

Making things in the recreation hall appear to run easily takes a lot of time spent in preparation, something that Hawkins does not usually have in abundance because of her family responsibilities and involvements in her home community of Middlebury.

Hawkins and her husband, Dave, have four children, Alli (23), Mitch (21), Kevin (17) and Abbi (13). Hawkins volunteers as a volleyball coach at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., and serves on the youth and young adult commission at her congregation, Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Hawkins attended Orlando 1997, St. Louis 1999 and Nashville 2001 without her family, but at San José 2007, Columbus 2009 and Pittsburgh 2011, her family assisted her.

"My family takes orders from me very well," Hawkins said. "I have been blessed to experience the patience of both my husband and my kids at those times when my stress level tops out or when I'm gone and leave part of my clan at home."

Hawkins' passion for the church, convention, youth and the recreation hall define her volunteer spirit.

"I am an event planner in my soul; if I had a real job, that is exactly what I'd do," she said. "So I really enjoy this task, and volunteering allows me flexibility in what I'm doing and when I'm doing it.

"I am energized by teenagers, the excitement they bring to life and the potential they have to change the world," she said. "When I began volunteering, I was also at a point in my life when I felt the need to figure out how I might be able to serve the church. This is a small way that I can give back for the experiences I had as an MYFer."

Largely as a result of Hawkins' flexibility and creativity, the recreation hall has become a highly anticipated part of convention and represents the event's focus on conventiongoer participation.

"I feel confident promoting recreation because I know someone creative is working behind the scenes," said Swartzendruber Miller. "I never have to worry about it being status quo."

Lois Mast, head volleyball coach at Bethany Christian High School, sees Hawkins' success as a volunteer as a reflection of her personality.

"She is a great organizer and a detailed person, and she is very enthusiastic in everything she does; she has a good, positive spirit," said Mast. "She understands the kids well enough to know what will work and what won't."

Pittsburgh 2011 was Hawkins' last convention as a volunteer; her niece will be taking over her volunteer position. Hawkins feels confident about this transition.

"Volunteering gives me a sense of fulfillment and purpose, but I think it's time for some fresh ideas," she said. "Kim will handle the job very capably and also has a love for youth."—*Johnny Kauffman of Mennonite Church USA*

Executive Board hears immigration concerns

Immigration study should be biblical, not political, according to IMH moderator

Madeline Maldonado told the Executive Board that the government has deported over half her congregation in Florida—at least 250 people.

Maldonado is co-pastor of Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvación in Fort Myers, Fla., and treasurer of Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH). Maldonado and Juan Montes, moderator of IMH, shared this fact and others during their meeting with the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. The EB met on July 4—the opening day of Pittsburgh 2011.

They met with these representatives to discuss the board's decision to hold the 2013 convention in Phoenix despite IMH's request for a new location due to Arizona's controversial immigration laws.

Montes, speaking on behalf of IMH, highlighted two of the 11 commitments IMH recommended to the EB.

Montes asked that Mennonite Church USA reserve one quarter for focused Sunday school study on the immigration issue from a Scriptural perspective. He also asked for one day per year reserved for prayer regarding immigration.

He said the study should focus on the church, not politics, and that studying the Bible regarding this issue could bring unity.

Iris de León-Hartshorn, director for transformative peacemaking, said she hears churches asking for churchwide studies such as what Montes describes.

Dick Thomas, moderator-elect, mentioned that personal experience with immigration offers the most transformation for individuals. He told of his visit to Maldonado's church. Thomas said he now wonders if the church members he met during that visit were among those deported.

Montes and Maldonado also said the second satellite convention location in a state other than Arizona was not a good idea. Some individuals who will not attend Phoenix 2013 say they might feel like "second-class citizens" at another location, said Maldonado. However, she added, streaming the services in a church setting is a better option.

Juanita Nuñez of Iglesia Menonita Hispana and an Executive Board member said people will approach convention differently in 2013. "Something good is coming out of all this," she said.—*Anna Groff*

Pink Mennos focus on healing and hope

Randall Spaulding led worship at off-site service during Pittsburgh 2011.

Participants at Pittsburgh 2011 calling themselves Pink Mennos held a worship service on July 5 that focused on healing and hope and included much singing.

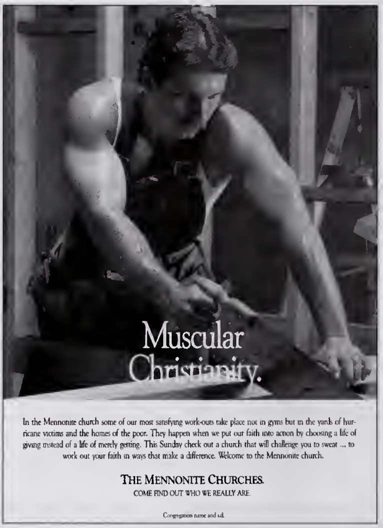
Not allowed to meet on site, the group met at the Smithfield United Church of Christ several blocks from the convention center. Randall Spaulding, pastor of Covenant Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla., until July 25, gave a homily at the service and led a choir in several songs. He will begin as a seminary student at Yale Divinity School this fall. Spaulding, whose congregation is under discipline from Southeast Mennonite Conference because he is in a homosexual relationship, told a story about author Alice Walker, who lost her sight in one eye while young and felt shame and unwholeness for many years because of it. Then one day her 3-year-old daughter said to her, "I see a world in your eye."

"We need to see a world in the eye of each person we meet," Spaulding said. He referred to Matthew 5, which tells of Jesus welcoming those who are outcast, then saying at one point, "You are the salt of the earth ... [and] the light of the world." Spaulding noted that LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people and their allies have felt the sting of rejection. *(Continued on page 41)*

Philip Kendall (left) and Darian Harnish (right) sing during the Pink Menno worship service on July 5 at the Smithfield United Church of Christ.

Looking back at Third Way Media

'Muscular Christianity' ad appeared in *Newsweek* in 1993.


Muscular
Christianity.

In the Mennonite church some of our most satisfying work-outs take place not in gyms but in the yards of hurricane victims and the homes of the poor. They happen when we put our faith into action by choosing a life of giving instead of a life of merely getting. This Sunday check out a church that will challenge you to sweat ... to work out your faith in ways that make a difference. Welcome to the Mennonite church.

THE MENNONITE CHURCHES.
COME FIND OUT WHO WE REALLY ARE.

Congregation name and ad.

The picture was simple: A muscle-bound man, sawing a board, tagged with the line "Muscular Christianity." It was an advertisement for the Mennonite Church, and it appeared in *Newsweek* magazine in 1993.

This ad was one of the more memorable pieces that Melodie Davis, a producer and writer at Third Way Media, worked on during her 36-year tenure.

"The ad campaign got a lot of attention," Davis recalls. "It started as an MVS guy working construction and turned into a professional model with muscles."

That print campaign generated a lot of talk across the church about image and the cost of advertising, but it's only one of the many ways that the Third Way Media and its various iterations have been an Anabaptist media presence through the years.

Known first as Mennonite Broadcasts, then a succession of variations of Mennonite Media, the organization changed its name to Third Way Media in 2009 to strengthen ties with its best-known activity, the Third Way Café website. Third Way Media merged with Mennonite Publishing Network on July 1 to become MennoMedia, although the name Third Way Media will still be used for outreach and electronic media productions. Mennonite Mission Network will continue in a partnership role to offer financial and collaborative support to the new agency.

The Mennonite Church's official foray into the wider world of media began with a group of college students in the 1950s. (Other independent radio programs began earlier). Students at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va., calling themselves Crusaders for Christ, sang on a local radio station. Soon B. Charles Hostetter, then campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite, was named the regular speaker on the program, which became known as The Mennonite Hour. In 1953, it became the official radio broadcast of the Mennonite Church. Mennonite Board of Missions and eventually Mennonite Mission Network gave leadership to this outreach.

Over the years, Third Way Media expanded to include more radio programs, video productions and, in 1998, added Third Way Café, a popular website with information about Mennonite culture and belief. The 2000s have been focused on creating documentaries on various social issues—such as mental illness, suicide and living with aging parents—along with websites that provide community support for people dealing with issues the documentaries addressed. Third Way Media documentaries have won multiple awards, both religious and secular, and have aired on network and cable television stations such as ABC, NBC, Odyssey Networks and Hallmark.

Most recently, in 2010, Third Way Media began producing Shaping Families, a radio program that continues to focus on social issues. It is currently airing on 17 radio stations across the country.

All these ventures have a specific purpose: to provide an Anabaptist voice in the world of secular media.

"Since media is such a strong influence, we want our voice to be a part of it," Burton Buller, former director of Third Way Media, said in a 2009 interview.

The biggest challenge in the merger, according to Davis, will be bringing together two groups that have had different emphases—Mennonite Publishing Network focuses primarily on books and curriculum— but she's excited about the possibilities and the viability of the new organization.

"We've been talking about collaboration, and now seems like the time to bring Third Way Media and MPN together," says Davis. "If you have a print piece, you need the multimedia piece—that's a reflection of what's happening in the media world."

Staff of the new MennoMedia agency plan to work across media platforms for Sunday school curricula, hymnals, books, videos and other media, all from an Anabaptist faith perspective, according to Sheri Hartzler, director of electronic media in the new agency. As for Third Way Media's work, the Shaping Families radio program will continue for now, along with Third Way Café, as well as documentary and Shaping Families websites. A new documentary from Third Way Media, *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*, is in final production stages and will air beginning Oct. 23 on ABC-TV local stations.—*Melanie Hess*

A timeline of Mennonite media

2011 Third Way Media merges with Mennonite Publishing Network on July 1 to form MennoMedia. Russ Eanes becomes director.

2010 Shaping Families radio program and website launched; integration with Mennonite Publishing Network approved; *Who are the Mennonites?* DVD released

2009 Name changed to Third Way Media; *Classic Hymns of Revival and Mission* CD released

2003 "Beyond Skin" radio spots produced

2001-2009 Eight different documentaries released and aired on national television

1999 Burton Buller named director of Mennonite Media

1998 Third Way Café Internet ministry website developed; Choice Books moves to a separate company

1997 Choice Books sells more than 2 million books

1991 *Whole People Whole Earth*, a video series for youth, released

1986 First *All God's People* video released

1979 Final *Mennonite Hour* program

1969 First Mennonite TV spots on "Resolving Family Conflict"

1965 Lifeline Books, later Choice Books, becomes a program of Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc.

1956-1960 Broadcasts begin in Navajo, Japanese, French, German and Russian

1955 First Home Bible Studies released

1953 First overseas release of *The Mennonite Hour*

1952 *Crusaders for Christ* becomes *The Mennonite Hour*

1951 *Crusaders for Christ* first broadcast in Harrisonburg

—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Pink Mennos

(Continued from page 39)

God's love as expressed by Jesus, he said, can seem scandalous in accepting those deemed unacceptable. "God outrageously calls us to see a world in the eye of others," he said.

In spite of the rejection many feel, things are changing, Spaulding said. Scientific knowledge points to "the inescapable conclusion that affectional and sexual orientation is not a moral choice," he said.

Hope is dynamic, not static, Spaulding said. His hope comes from those who model the love of God, he said.

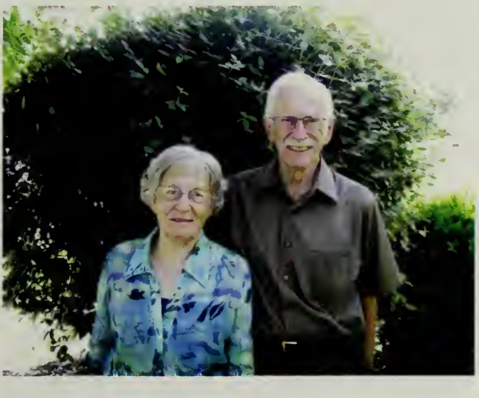
In a blessing of hands ceremony, people came forward and received an anointing of oil on their hands to receive and give healing and love. About 100 people took part in the service.

The group took an offering to help the Brethren Mennonite Council on LGBT concerns defray costs of renting space for the worship service and for workshops, since the group was not allowed to use space on the convention site.

Two students from the Center for Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., announced a student-led campaign to attach rainbow stickers to the Mennonite hymnal supplements that Spaulding helped create.

On March 8, the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA told Spaulding he could no longer serve on the binational worship council.—*Gordon Houser*

Drivers get peace pitcher



Bonnie and John Driver (East Goshen Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.) were awarded the Peace and Justice Support Network's peace pitcher award July 7 during the Mennonite Church USA convention in Pittsburgh. The Drivers worked in several countries, including Uruguay, Argentina, Spain and Guatemala, and John was often a visiting professor in other countries as well. He wrote extensively about the redemptive value of suffering, including its ability to lead to forgiveness and reconciliation among the oppressed and their oppressors.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

MCC international work to be administered jointly

Willie Reimer and Ruth Keidel Clemens appointed as program directors

As part of Mennonite Central Committee's restructuring process, program directors for MCC Canada and MCC U.S. have been named to jointly administer MCC's international program.

Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada, and J. Ron Byler, executive director of MCC U.S., announce that Willie Reimer has been appointed director of programs for MCC Canada and Ruth Keidel Clemens director of programs for MCC U.S. Together, the directors will administer MCC's international program, which is jointly owned by MCC Canada and MCC U.S. Individually, they also will give leadership to domestic programs in their own countries. They will begin transitioning into their new roles Sept. 1.

Reimer has served as the director of MCC's Food, Disaster and Material Resources department since 1997. Clemens is the executive director of MCC East Coast, a position she has filled since 2007.

"Willie's extensive international experiences, along with his strong network of relationships, both within MCC and in the broader community of nongovernment organizations, are tremendous assets at this point in time," says Peters.

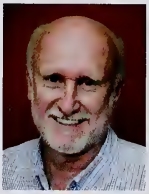
Byler says, "In leading MCC East Coast, Ruth has demonstrated her commitment to work with the churches. Ruth's appointment should be a strong signal about MCC's desire to strengthen its connections with our sponsoring denominations in the United States and with Anabaptist churches around the world."

Their appointments are part of MCC's restructuring process, New Wineskins, which follows the creation of a new shared vision and purpose for MCC, a process known as New Wine.

By appointing program directors in both countries, MCC Canada and MCC U.S. will be equally responsible for and invested in MCC's international program.

Reimer's first involvement with MCC was in 1973, when he served as an MCC service worker in Nigeria. He has taught at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg and served as an MCC representative in Nigeria and Sudan and as the MCC regional representative for East Africa.

"I fully support MCC's approach, which combines relief, development and peace," says Reimer. "One of the strengths of MCC is working in long-term partnership with churches and partner organizations in 60 countries. This collaboration enables MCC to address the needs and concerns of the most vulnerable people affected by conflict, disaster and economic challenges."



Reimer

Keidel Clemens

Reimer and his wife, Ingrid van Kampen, live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He is a member of Rivereast Mennonite Brethren Church. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in math from the University of Winnipeg in 1973 and a master's degree in peace from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 1997.

Clemens, who lives in Baltimore with her husband, Jonathan Clemens, and their four young adult children, is a member of North Baltimore Mennonite Church, a Mennonite Church USA congregation.

"I look forward to working closely with MCC Canada and with MCC's ongoing partners around the world, building on the strengths of this 90-year-old organization that is MCC," says Clemens.

Her international experience began as a child in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where her parents were missionaries. She later served in Congo with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and MCC for five years and worked in MCC's Human Resources department, at its Akron, Pa., office. As MCC representatives, she and her husband led programs in Cambodia for five years.

Clemens has extensive experience in nonprofit program development and management, working in Baltimore with The Shepherd's Clinic, Asylum Seekers Housing Network, Mennonite Voluntary Service and World Relief.

She holds a master's degree in management of nonprofits from College of Notre Dame of Maryland, a master's degree in community/agency counseling from Western Michigan University and a bachelor's degree in music and psychology from Indiana University.—*Mennonite Central Committee staff*

Autumn Hope Conference at Merry Lea
Worship, theological reflection and outdoor fieldwork in Merry Lea's beautiful ecosystems.
Just Footprints: Stepping Carefully in Our Creator's World
Friday, October 7, 6 p.m. to Sunday, October 9, noon
$125 includes all meals; $20 per person per night.
email jenniferhs@goshen.edu to register.

'New realities' bring changes to EMM

Eastern Mennonite Missions reduces staff by 10 full-time equivalent positions.

Major structural changes are being implemented at the administrative offices of Eastern Mennonite Missions. In order to respond to new global realities in missions, a restructuring is underway that will move more decision-making to the field, streamline administrative functions and result in greater efficiency in keeping costs low.

In the new administrative structure, the current departments of global ministries, discipleship ministries and human resources will merge into two new teams of staff that will collaborate more fully in sending and training/coaching short- and long-term missionaries.

A coaching team will train and coach all EMM field personnel—both short- and long-term workers.

"This team will keep its eye on what is happening on the field but will function primarily as coaches rather than decision makers," says Glenn Kauffman, director of the global ministries. "The goal is to create an environment where more decisions can be made on the field rather than at the administrative offices."

At the heart of the coaching team are three new leadership positions; one coach for pioneering, one for partnership and another for discipleship. These leadership roles will center on coaching and training all EMM personnel to be effective and productive wherever they work in the world.

The pioneering and partnership coaches will aim to coach, train and support all EMM field personnel working in pioneering and partnering locations. The discipleship coach will carry a special responsibility to engage with young people. Within this new structure, EMM will continue to send young people into YES, mission internships and other short-term mission assignments.

"Young people will always be an important focus for EMM's call to mission," says Ryan Showalter, director of discipleship ministries. "Young people are integral to missions, and we remain committed to their discipleship and involvement in mission."

The sending team, made up of a personnel director, two recruiters and a missionary support team coach, will recruit and process applications for short-term and long-term assignments.

"The team is designed to make the whole sending process more synthesized and effective. The discernment process will be an important function of this team as we meet and encourage [people] who are sensing a call to missions," Sherill Hostetter, co-director of human resources, says.

Field-based Regional Representatives (RRs) are another addition to the new structure. The RRs will live in a particular area and will oversee all personnel living in that region. Ten to 12 representatives will be appointed over the next few weeks.

As the initial contact for all EMM missionaries living and working in another culture, the RRs will provide physical and emotional support, with assistance from the coaches along with the member-care director, who will oversee the well-being of workers both on the field and staff at home.

"While there are many advantages to the new restructuring, one important advantage is that it will help EMM effectively function with a smaller administrative staff," EMM president Richard Showalter says. "This is always a desirable goal but has an additional importance in a challenging economy."

These changes will allow for a reduction of administrative staff. EMM estimates that this new structure will reduce the size of administrative staff by approximately 10 full-time positions. Full implementation of this new structure will occur later this year.

Some staff will be losing their jobs. Other staff will be transitioning into new roles. The process is painful, but we are committed to seeing it through.—Richard Showalter

"This is a challenging time for EMM as we work through the process of reducing central administrative office staff," Showalter says. "Some staff will be losing their jobs. Other staff will be transitioning into new roles. The process is painful, but we are committed to seeing it through and creating an effective and dynamic administrative team to work at fulfilling the Great Commission. I am particularly grateful for the support from staff for changes of this magnitude."

In the midst of this time of change, EMM will continue to send and support long- and short-term personnel. All EMM field personnel are supported in large part through missionary support teams' designated contributions and are not in danger of being pulled off the field due to this review of administrative structure.

"Our core vision remains the same, although the forms of mission we embrace will doubtless change to meet the new global realities," Showalter says. "We look forward to working within a new structure, aligning administration with vision and strategy, just as we look forward to welcoming our new president later this year."—*Linda Moffett for Eastern Mennonite Missions*

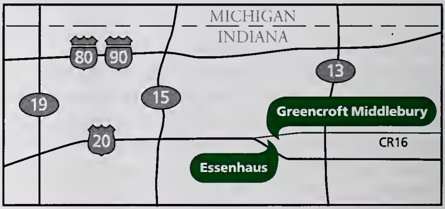
Life's Encore
Begins Here.

Greencroft Middlebury
a continuing care living community

Fresh air, Amish heritage and a country-like setting is what you can expect living in Middlebury, Indiana. Greencroft Middlebury gives you the freedom and independence you deserve during your encore years. Say goodbye to maintenance and yard work and hello to do what you want, when you want. Should you ever need assisted living or nursing care, you have priority access.

Visit Middlebury on us!

Considering a move to a continuing care living community? Visit Greencroft Middlebury and receive an overnight stay and meal at Das Dutchman Essenhaus. To qualify, call 574.825.6756 for details.


MICHIGAN
INDIANA
80
90
13
19
15
Greencroft Middlebury
20
CR16
Essenhaus

Our mission

In keeping with our Mennonite values and high standards of care, Greencroft Middlebury is committed to creating a dynamic community that embraces the creativity, contributions and challenges of aging for all.

Greencroft Middlebury

GREENCROFT® COMMUNITIES

Live, Here. For the Best of Your Life.

701 Windridge Drive, Middlebury, IN 46540
www.greencroftcommunities.org

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS 55 AND OLDER.

First Mennonite woman ordained in NYC in 100 years

Addie Banks is a pastor at King of Glory Tabernacle and on the Executive Board.

Addie Banks, a pastor at King of Glory Tabernacle in the Bronx, N.Y., was ordained for ministry on June 18 at Riverside Church, New York City.

Banks is the first woman to be formally ordained for ministry in a Mennonite Church USA congregation in New York City since 1911.

There had only been one other Mennonite woman, Ann J. Allebach, ordained by Eastern District Conference for ministry in the New York City area, 100 years ago.

Banks also serves as a member of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

The service was officiated by leaders of Atlantic Coast Conference and Lancaster Mennonite Conference, the NYC Mennonite Oversight Council and Iglesia Menonita Hispana and attended by representative members of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board—Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Kenneth Thompson.

Thompson also represented African-American Mennonite Association and Mennonite Church USA Intercultural Relations Reference Committee.

Bishop Michael Banks, Addie's husband, said that this ordination is also significant because it is "true to the spirit of Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, which urges us to search the Scriptures and apply it in present time. This is a faithful response to God's call to do justice and express his progressive revelation."

The speaker for the evening, Sister Terry Ricard, ODM, taking her text from Paul's words in Philippians 3, encouraged Addie and everyone to believe "the sufferings of Christ yield both the likeness and the newness of his life within us."

Ricard went on to compare Banks' life to this point as a daffodil growing up amid an open lot strewn with debris and how, like that flower, Addie has grown, pushed through and up past racism, sexism and poverty.

Along with the ordination license from area bishops, Addie received a quilted mantle made by several women to commemorate this historic step.

Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishops Keith Weaver and Dale Stoltzfus followed with a statement of resolution on behalf of their conference that officially recognized and affirmed her call unto full pulpit ministry in Mennonite Church USA.

Barbara Bethea, aka Afrikana Madonna and poetess, wrote a poem, "For the Ordination of Minister Addie Sanders Banks." Go to www.themennonite.org/issues/14-7/articles/Minister_Addie_Banks to read the poem.
—Kenneth Thompson

Bro. Philip Freeman of King of Glory Tabernacle

Women pray for Banks during the ordination service. They include Banks' mothers and sisters, members of King of Glory Tabernacle and other women leaders in Mennonite Church USA.

Lehman is longest-serving professor at EMU

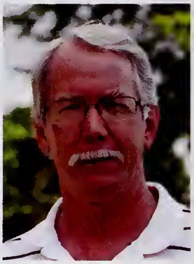
Galen Lehman continues his career at Eastern Mennonite after three decades.

Fred Kniss remembers well the Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., professor who taught him psychology in the mid-1970s.

But it probably doesn't hurt that Kniss, 54, who's serving as the acting president during President Loren Swartzendruber's sabbatical, still sees the man occasionally. After all, professor Galen Lehman has continued his career there for more than three decades.

Lehman, 63, is the longest-serving professor at EMU, beginning his career with the university in 1973 in the psychology department. When he first started teaching, he often found his students were close to his own age.

Now he's finding that many of them are children of his former pupils.



"If I ever find someone who says I taught their grandparent, I'll know it's time to quit," he says with a laugh.

Kniss says having long-term professors such as Lehman around provides other employees with a sense of context and stability.

"A problem or an issue comes up, and people who haven't been around think it's new," says Kniss. "[But] people who have been around say, 'Oh yeah, we dealt with this back in 1970.' Or they say, 'Here are the roots of the issue.'"

Lehman, who is now the psychology department chair, has served up his share of new ideas while at the university. He was among the first to integrate computers into the classroom, using an Apple II computer to administer tests to students in 1974. He also led an initiative to turn a dirt-floor basement in the Suter Science Center into instructional space, creating an area where upper-class psychology students could spend time with underclassmen.

Lehman received his bachelor's degree in psychology from EMU in 1973. He earned his master's degree in general psychology from then-Hollins College, and he earned his doctorate from Virginia Tech in applied experimental psychology. His expertise is in working with groups to solve practical problems or prevent unsafe behaviors, particularly in the workplace.

Lehman is also active with the Virginia Mennonite Missions Board. He makes several trips yearly to Jamaica to assist with the logistics of missions there. He splits his time between EMU and working as the Caribbean regional director for the board. Some might see a contradiction in his interest in science and his dedication to his faith, but not Lehman. For him, the two work together.

"I can use my science and knowledge of human behavior ... to motivate people," says Lehman, who was raised in the Mennonite church. "One of the things I find fulfilling about my work is that I feel each area—[science and religion]—complements the other."

The Maryland native became interested in psychology after living for a few years in the late 1960s in Jamaica, where he did missions work as part of Alternative Service during the Vietnam War. The experience exposed him to the behavioral problems some disabled children in the Caribbean nation faced, such as learning difficulties or acting out and other disciplinary issues.

Now he serves on the board for a school for deaf children in Jamaica, using his background in psychology to help teachers learn how to better interact with students with disabilities.

Lehman says he hadn't considered teaching psychology until a professor asked him during his senior year if he had thought about teaching the subject.

"It was really that affirmation from a mentor of mine that sort of planted in me the dream of teaching," he says.

And so it was that Lehman's dream blossomed into a lifelong career, allowing him to leave his mark on a host of students.

Lehman's interests extend beyond the science of the mind. He enjoys architecture (he designed and built his own home, as well as several others) and the visual arts, such as photography and videography. He lives on a farm, where he raises cattle and bales hay.

"He has a lot of different interests and a lot of energy and curiosity. And I think that's always a good thing to have in a university—people who ask questions outside their disciplinary box," Kniss says.—*Joshua Brown of the* Daily News-Record. *Reprinted with permission.*

cliktraks

Save up to 25% over DIY CD Distribution

Record your entire service live and

In 30 Seconds

Make CDs, podcasts and post to your website

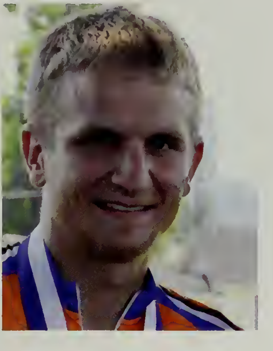
Check out how to simplify your Audio Booth's recording and distribution at cliktraks.com

Cliktraks • Box 27 Kidron, OH • cliktraks.com

Second accident for Bluffton bus accident survivor

Allen Slabaugh says first bus accident inspired him to serve through MVS.

Allen Slabaugh, an MVS volunteer, survived the Bluffton (Ohio) University baseball team's bus accident on March 2, 2007, in Atlanta. The bus driver and his wife, along with five teammates, were killed in the accident.



Four years later, Slabaugh survived another major traffic accident.

This time, Slabaugh was riding in a van with eight other cyclists in the Bicycle Adventure, a fund-raising and awareness-raising trip for the Fuller Center for Housing, located in Americus, Ga.

On June 7, Slabaugh and the riders were traveling outside Burly, Idaho, when the 12-passenger van's tires blew out. The van swerved and eventually rolled over.

Slabaugh found himself upside down in the van. He managed to undo his seatbelt and crawl out the window with the rest of the passengers and call 911.

"I had a whirlwind of thoughts and questions running through my mind, including some flashbacks of the previous accident," he said on June 19. "It was a huge relief when I first realized everyone was all right."

No riders were seriously hurt, but four experienced minor injuries.

Slabaugh said that three of the four individuals with minor injuries have regained strength to ride again.

However, one rider, Tom Weber, dislocated his shoulder and is home resting in Denver with hopes to join the ride later. Unfortunately, Weber missed the start of the ride.

Slabaugh said he no longer experiences any pain from the second accident.

He said one person asked him if he feels invincible after these two accidents, but he told them this is not the case.

"It once again reminds you just how quickly your life can be taken from you and that you truly need to live every day to its fullest," he said.

Slabaugh's work with Mennonite Voluntary Service reflects this mentality.

Slabaugh volunteered with Habitat for Humanity through Mennonite Voluntary Service last year and participated in a portion of the Fuller Center's Bicycle Adventure.

The Fuller Center is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty housing worldwide.

The Bicycle Adventure founder asked Slabaugh to lead the trip this summer, so Slabaugh decided to volunteer through MVS for another year.

Slabaugh majored in sports management at Bluffton University and planned to work in the business side of baseball.

According to a June 10 Associated Press story, Slabaugh said that because of the Bluffton crash, "he refocused and wound up entering the Mennonite Volunteer [sic] Service program and working with groups such as the Fuller Center."

Also according to the AP story, Slabaugh grew up among Mennonites in Dalton, Ohio, but is not Mennonite. He said, "When you go through something like that, it definitely makes you think about what's important."

Fortunately, the June accident did not change the fund-raising bicycling trip plans, aside from the time it took to find a new van and trailer.

The trip's plans include a 3,600-mile route that began on June 10 in Seattle and hopes to end Aug. 14 in Washington, D.C.—*Anna Groff*

Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans

Everence Financial (formerly MMA) has an opportunity in its Goshen, Ind., office, for a person passionate about charitable giving to serve as Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans. This person will be responsible to provide leadership and product management for charitable products including charitable gift annuities and donor-advised funds.

Qualified candidates will preferably have a law degree; experience in a law practice, development work, or with charitable giving products. Management experience is preferred. Travel required (10 to 15 percent).

Everence is an established, highly trusted, financial services organization with a strong national presence. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; email: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Japanese Mennonites, BIC members organize for relief

Mennonite World Conference group hears about food, dislocation, radiation.

Photo provided

Pastor Minay Gishe (left) and his wife Yasocho (center) of Bible Baptist Church, represent one of the Baptist churches that has received help from Japan Mennonite Fellowship in Kesennumu City with Paulus Hartono (right).

A Mennonite World Conference delegation to Japan May 21-30 brought hope and support to Japanese Anabaptists still traumatized by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant meltdown in northeast Japan last March. The MWC delegation came at the invitation of Japan Mennonite Fellowship (JMF).

The group included MWC Deacons Commission secretary Bert Lobe, Paulus Hartono of the Indonesia Mennonite Diaconal Service and Willie Reimer of Mennonite Central Committee. The delegation held three main meetings in Tokyo and the northern island of Hokkaido, meeting with representatives of the JMF, which includes the four MWC member churches. They also met in Osaka with representatives of the Nippon Menonaito Burezaren Kyodan (Mennonite Brethren Conference), which is not a member of MWC.

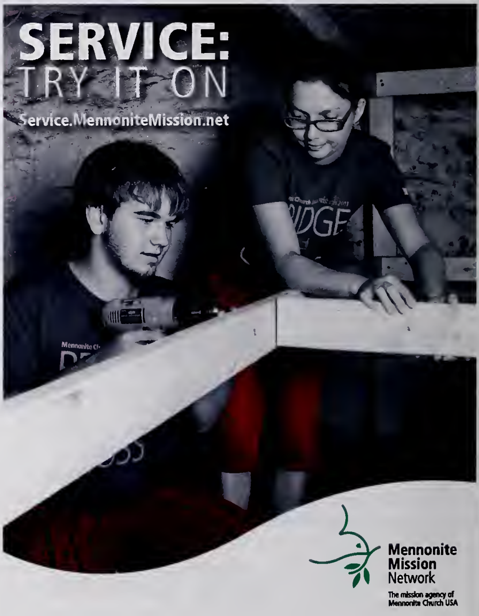
"It is good that you have come," one participant told the delegation. "We do not know [our way forward] yet, but we will listen to each other. The problems are complex. Solutions will take time." In the course of the visit, however, it became clear that JMF was ready to organize itself to initiate a response.

On May 28, JMF took a significant step in forming the East Japan Great Disaster Relief Assistance Committee to provide relief and early rehabilitation. JMF had received $55,000 from their member churches for disaster relief.

MCC, which has received more than $954,000 for Japan relief, has earmarked a portion of their donations to support the Anabaptist churches' coordinated efforts and is currently in communication with JMF regarding joint initiatives taking place. MCC has already given $700,000 to Church World Service.

While issues around food and dislocation were overwhelming, the MWC delegation also heard concern about radiation. According to Bert Lobe, "the delegation sensed general angst with regard to nuclear energy. The impact on those close to the Fukushima Daiichi reactors remains of great concern." There are 70 nuclear power plants in Japan.

"Are there atomic energy experts in the Anabaptist communion with whom we might be in conversation? Can you send us a theologian who can help us address the nuclear question?" asked Takanobu Tojo from the Tokyo Chiku Menonaito Kyokai Rengo (Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches). Since the delegation visit, the JMF has begun a study process and would like to work with the MWC Peace Commission to address the nuclear energy concerns among Japanese.—*Ferne Burkhardt and Byron Rempel-Burkholder of Mennonite World Conference*


SERVICE:
TRY IT ON
Service.MennoniteMission.net
Mennonite Mission Network
The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

Mennonite politicians from Congo, U.S. meet

Three Elkhart County, Ind., elected officials meet with senator from DR Congo.

Nina B. Lanctot

From left: Everett Thomas and Julia Gautshe (Goshen city council members), Mike Yoder (Elkhart county commissioner), Rachel Miller Jacobs (interpreter), Marie-Jeanne Mujinga (president of BOMEN Sewing Group) and senator Gaston Nkole (DR Congo) meet for lunch in Goshen, Ind.

Senator Gaston Nkole of the Democratic Republic of Congo shared a kingdom "power lunch" with local elected officials in Goshen, Ind., on June 28.

At the invitation of Michiana Friends of Congo they met, politician-to-politician and Mennonite-to-Mennonite, to talk about the opportunities and challenges of Anabaptists serving in government.

Goshen city council members Everett Thomas and Julia Gautshe and Elkhart County commissioner Mike Yoder met to talk faith and politics with the aid of interpretation by Rachel Miller Jacobs. Marie-Jeanne Mujinga, president of the BOMEN Sewing Group in Kinshasa, also joined.

When Yoder asked about challenges facing Nkole, a long story ensued. Nkole recounted decades of puppet governments influenced by colonialism, capitalism and communism; conflict spilling over from Uganda and Rwanda and clandestine corporate battles for the richest mineral deposits in the world ravage the country.

For decades after colonial independence from Belgium in 1960, the United States, Belgium and the Soviet Union manipulated national leadership. Embattled Ugandans and Rwandans following the Tutsi genocide of Hutus in the 1990s spilled into and remain in eastern Congo. Yet a nationwide election was held in 2006, and a new constitution was approved. Nkole was appointed to serve in the senate. Nkole said that bribes pervade the justice system.

"A young man convicted of raping our niece was released after only one month of a seven-year sentence—due to a bribe," said Nkole."However, as a Mennonite, I accept no bribes. Christians in politics must show we are true to our faith."

When asked about serving church and state, Nkole said, "It is difficult for politicians who are also church leaders to serve both. Each is demanding. This is the challenge for Komuesa, president of Mennonite Church of Congo, who is now also elected as governor of his province."

As a Mennonite I accept no bribes. Christians in politics must show we are true to our faith.—Gaston Nkole

Bridging national politics and local realities, Nkole and Mujinga hold the tension between hopelessness and hope. Their home congregation in Kinshasa is named Bondeko (meaning solidarity) Mennonite Church. Nkole and Mujinga visited the Michiana area as guests of Michiana Friends of Congo. Congo is home to over 220,000 members of Mennonite World Conference in two Mennonite groups and one Mennonite Brethren group—*Nina B. Lanctot*

Recipe for disaster:

1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS

Goodville Mutual

New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Federal cuts affect Mission Network workers

Volunteers will not receive education grants through AmeriCorps in 2011-2012.

Participants serving in Mennonite Voluntary Service and Service Adventure will not receive education grants through the AmeriCorps Education Award Program for the 2011-2012 term, Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) has learned.

The cuts are a result of the federal government's reductions to the AmeriCorps budget.

Mennonite Voluntary Service and Service Adventure are year-long service opportunities for young adults through MMN. Mennonite Voluntary Service participants are typically recent college graduates, while Service Adventure participants tend to be recent high school graduates.

In previous years, nearly half the participants in these two programs received educational grants of $5,350 per year to help pay college or graduate school tuition or pay student loans. Fifty MMN participants received educational assistance grants last year out of 106 participants.

MMN has participated in the AmeriCorps program through the Catholic Volunteer Network, a networking organization for more than 200 faith-based volunteer groups, including other Anabaptist service programs, such as Brethren Volunteer Service. The Catholic Volunteer Network was one of more than 300 umbrella organizations that applied for AmeriCorps educational grants but was not one of the 50 approved this year.

The Catholic Volunteer Network plans to reapply for access to the educational grant next year.

Del Hershberger, the director of Mission Network's Christian Service programs, is hopeful that cuts to educational grants will not affect participation in either service program.

The cuts in AmeriCorps funding, however, could have a devastating effect on organizations that rely on AmeriCorps volunteers to provide valuable services in their communities. Furthermore, the grants are one way low-income students can afford college.

"This is just one example of how budget decisions in Washington are felt here on the ground," Hershberger says. "But this is also an opportunity for the church to step up and support our young people who want to join the long tradition of service that the Mennonite church is known for."
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Study online with RBC

rosedale.edu

↳ rbc online ↳ get connected ↳ rbc online

Fall 2011

- ↳ Principles of Biblical Interpretation
- ↳ Pastoral Care & Counseling
- ↳ Romans

Spring 2012

- ↳ Leadership in Ministry
- ↳ Survey of Bible Doctrine
- ↳ Preaching the Biblical Text

For credit or personal enrichment

Rosedale Bible College

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

MENNONITE STORY IN POLAND (August 9-17)
VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (Sept. 19-28)
A PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE (September 20-30)
EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct.12-22)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct. 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (Nov.12-21)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-11)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)
TOURMAGINATION MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

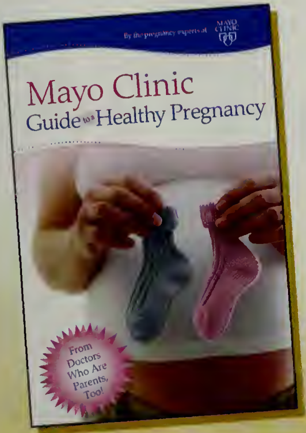
9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

AUTHORED BY

Mayo Clinic experts –


By the pregnancy experts at Mayo Clinic
Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy
From Doctors Who Are Parents, Too!

The brand new book for parents-to-be, *Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy*, is the most up-to-date and comprehensive source on pregnancy that all expectant moms and dads can trust.

Mayo Clinic Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy
512 pages, $19.95
full color throughout
paperback

Medical editor Myra Wick, M.D., Ph.D.
As a mother of four children, Dr. Wick can relate to pregnancy from both a doctor's and a mother's perspective.

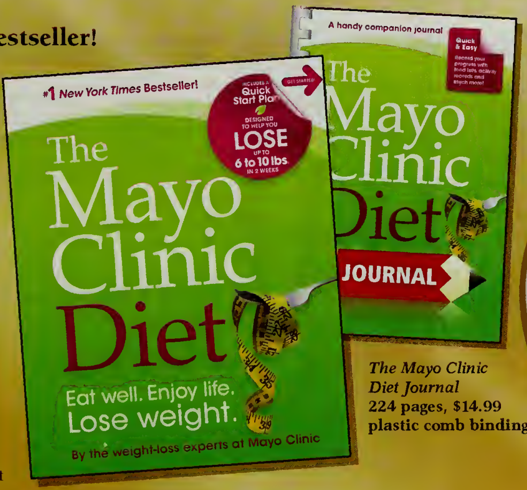
• •

#1 *New York Times* Bestseller!

From Mayo Clinic, a leading authority on health and nutrition, comes *The Mayo Clinic Diet*, designed to be the last diet you'll ever need.

Finally, here's the diet that helps you accomplish real and lasting weight-loss.

The Mayo Clinic Diet
256 pages, $25.99
full color throughout
hardcover with dustjacket


#1 New York Times Bestseller!
Includes a Quick Start Plan
Designed to help you LOSE up to 6 to 10 lbs in 2 weeks
The Mayo Clinic Diet
Eat well. Enjoy life. Lose weight.
By the weight-loss experts at Mayo Clinic
A handy companion journal
Quick & Easy
The Mayo Clinic Diet JOURNAL

The Mayo Clinic Diet Journal
224 pages, $14.99
plastic comb binding

Medical editor-in-chief
Donald Hensrud, M.D.

*"What separates **The Mayo Clinic Diet** from the fads? It encourages healthy living, meant to last a lifetime."* —USA Today Weekend

Good Books®

Available from your favorite bookstore or online retailer.
To order directly from the publisher, please call **800/762-7171**, ext. 221.
www.GoodBooks.com

Tractor Trek attracts 'farm girls'

'Visit the Villages Tractor Trek' raises $40,000 for Eden Health Care Services.

Youth gave a boost to the day at the fourth annual Eden "Visit the Villages Tractor Trek" on July 16 in Reinland, Manitoba. While each year there has been a young person driving a tractor, this year there were four, and three of them were girls.

The Trek is a fund-raiser for the Mennonite-owned Eden Health Care Services and its programs in southern Manitoba. Money raised supports mental health recovery programs such as housing, employment, counseling and counseling for people living with addictions. The Trek raised over $40,000.

People entering their tractors can be of any age—but the tractors must be 40 years or older.

New drivers this year were Haley and Megan Ens together with their cousin Kirsten Friesen. Dressed in T-shirts that they proudly labeled "farm girls," they drove a 1941 VC Case that their grandfather Abe Ens had restored and specially outfitted with three seats.

The three generations of Ens' drove in a row with the girls first, then Chris Ens, father of Haley and Megan, followed by Abe Ens, the grandfather of the girls.—*Eden Health Care Services*

Photo provided

From left: Abe Ens, Chris Ens, Kirsten Friesen, Haley and Megan Ens with the 1941 VC Case that Abe restored.

More Time With Family!

Photo: Larry Lefever Photography

"We decided there are better things to do in our retirement years than take care of a property. We love to come and go as we please and to have more time to spend with our family, volunteering and following other interests."

Charlie & Ruth Winters
New hybrid home residents

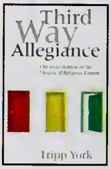
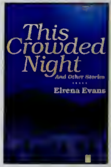
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Landis Homes

CONTINUING CARE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

For a tour call Donna Shank at **717-581-3935**

1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz • **www.landishomes.org**

New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC

Third Way Allegiance: Christian Witness in the Shadow of Religious Empire, Tripp York. "Civic religion is like immunization: people get just enough surrogate Christianity to keep them from the real thing! Here is a powerful cure." —*Greg Boyd.* 124p $12.95

This Crowded Night: And Other Stories, Elrena Evans. "To the Bible stories' bare contours, she adds earthly atmosphere, creaturely flesh, and very deep feeling." —*Julia Kasdorf.* 224p $15.95

God's Healing Strategy: An Introduction to the Bible's Main Themes, Rev. Ed., Ted Grimsrud. "The revisions are spot-on for today's issues. How do Christians relate to other faiths? Where is God when life falls apart? This book puts us in touch with that biblical struggle." —*Lynn Jost.* 194p $17.95

Cascadia

www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

WORKERS

Banks, Addie, was ordained as associate pastor of King of Glory Tabernacle, Bronx, N.Y., on June 18.

King, Daniel J., was licensed as congregational overseer of worship life of Mountain View Fellowship, Trout Run, Pa., on May 22.

Martin, Roger, was ordained as associate pastor of Parkview Mennonite Church, Reamstown, Pa., on March 27.

Martin, Stephen L., began a term as associate pastor of Parkview Mennonite Church, Reamstown, Pa., on March 27.

Ringler, Duane, was ordained as associate pastor of Bowmansville Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on May 22.

Rutt, John J., II, was ordained as associate pastor of Parkview Mennonite Church, Reamstown, Pa., on March 27.

Zimmerman, M. Craig, was licensed as congregational overseer of spiritual life of Mountain View Fellowship, Trout Run, Pa., on May 22.

OBITUARIES

Andrews, James "Carl," 68, South Bend, Ind., died April 14 of cancer. Spouse: Janice A. Kauffman Andrews. Parents: James Ralph and Rose Cira Andrews. Children: Jonathan Carl, Joy Alicia Bain; five grandchildren. Celebration of life service: April 19 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Basinger, L. Eugene, 92, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 1. Spouse: Lola Schertz Basinger. Parents: Daniel J. and Elizabeth Bixel Basinger. Children: Doug, Deb Stechschulte, Jerome; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 7 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Bauman, Verna Shoemaker, 80, Elmira, Ontario, died April 12. Spouse: Maurice Bauman. Parents: Irvine and Edna Shoemaker. Children: Rosemary McVeeters, Charles, Cameron, Mark, Eric, Jeff, Brad; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ontario.

Bohn, Alden Lantz, 79, Goshen, Ind., died June 13 of cancer. Spouse: Doris L. Roberts Bohn. Parents: Ernest J. and Nora Malinda Lantz Bohn. Children: Karl, Trish Donaldson, Linda Bohn, David; four grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Dalke, Helen Brucks, 96, Aberdeen, Idaho, died June 29. Spouse: Ferdinand Dalke. Parents: Henry and Louise Brucks. Children: Delon, Karen Dirks, Nancy Clark; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 5 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Derstine, Margaret G., 83, Lancaster, Pa., died June 12. Parents: Herbert A. and Lillian B. Godshall Derstine. Funeral: July 16 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Gerber, Weldon, 90, Millersburg, Ohio, died June 3. Spouse: Esther Schrock Gerber. Parents: William and Florence Geib Gerber. Children: Verdella Sue, Carolyn Bard, Cheryl Johnson, Connie Miller, Richard, John; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Gratz, Russell "Russ" Edward, 86, Lima, Ohio, died May 28. Spouse: Violet Hardesty Gratz. Parents: Homer S. and Edna Badertscher Gratz. Stepchildren: Roger Hardesty and E. Frank Hardesty; five grandchildren. Graveside service: June 1 in Woodlawn Cemetery, Lima.

Grove, Mary Ellen Hertzler, 97, Stuarts Draft, Va., died April 8. Spouse: Irvin Edward Grove (deceased). Parents: M.L. and Anna Wenger Hertzler. Children: Audrey Pena, Dr. Stanley N., Lawrence E., Wesley J., Dr. Robert I; 15 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Hostetler, Marvin J., 88, Orrville, Ohio, died June 26. Spouse: Ellen M. Taylor Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Asa and Ida Miller Hostetler. Children: Dale, Owen, Faye Overholt, Rita Wenger, Marla Nussbaum, Jane Steiner; 17 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 1 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Huffman, Dorothea Annette Haines, 92, Canton, Ohio, died July 3. Spouse: John D. Huffman (deceased). Parents: Merritt and Burdell Pilcher Haines. Child: Brian D. Huffman; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: July 8 at Stier Israel Funeral Home, Louisville, Ohio.

Janzen, Pearl Mierau, 87, Reedley, Calif., died May 16. Spouse: Victor Janzen. Parents: John and Lydia Friesen Mierau. Children: Mark, Christine Moyer, Michael; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Kauffman, Norman, 87, Kalispell, Mont., died June 6. Spouse: Margaret Kauffman. Parents: Norman LeRoy and Anna Kauffman. Children: LeRoy, Kermit, Galen, Jerry, Marlin; nine grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

Kaufman, Esther L. Peterson, 83, Canby, Ore., died June 23. Spouse: Eugene D. Kaufman (deceased). Parents: C.W. and Mabel Dokken Peterson. Children: Timothy, Troy, Stephanie Lindgren; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at Schowalter Villa, Hesston, Kan.

Kiser, Alvin Jacob, 93, Hinton, Va., died May 25. Spouse: Lillian Wenger Kiser (deceased). Parents: Jacob D. and Sally Shank Kiser. Children: Lyle; two grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 28 at Mount Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Lapp, Imogene K. Augsburger, 94, Sarasota, Fla., June 16. Spouse: Leon Lapp (deceased). Parents: David and Magdolena Springer Augsburger. Children: Neil; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 21 David Mortuary, Hopedale, Ill.

Lauver, W. Elton, 84, Lititz, Pa., died June 4 of cancer. Parents: William Graybill Lauver and Florence Byler Lauver. Funeral: June 8 at Bethany Chapel at Landis Homes, Lititz.

Lehman, Edith J. Stuckey, 85, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 7. Spouse: Earl Lehman. Parents: Earl and Florence Guth Stuckey. Children: Gene Allen, Judith Kae Lehman, James Neil, Kerrie Sue Lehman Sprunger; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 10 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Millen, James Edward, Jr., 79, Lititz, Pa., died July 2 of dementia. Spouse: Carolyn Joyce Burkhart Millen. Parents: James Edward and Catherine Bishop Millen. Children: James Edward III, Dana Beth Kunkle, Gregory Kent; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa.

Miller, David H., Jr., 69, Landisville, Pa., died June 8. Spouse: Gloria M. Shelly Miller. Parents: David H. and Edna P. Hauck Miller. Children: Douglas S.; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 13 at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Miller, Gloria M. Shelly, 70, Landisville, Pa., died July 2. Spouse: David H. Miller, Jr., (deceased). Parents: John S. and Stella Haldeman Shelly. Child: Doug; three grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Miller, Lois Adeline Troyer, 79, Engadine, Mich., died March 22. Spouse: Richard L. Miller. Parents: Clarence and Wavia I. Troyer Troyer. Children: Alan, Roderick, Wendell, Christine Yoder, Jonathan, Rachel Nolt, Leighton, David; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Engadine.

Miller, Mable B. Detweiler, 89, Middlebury, Ind., died June 27. Spouse: Nelson E. Miller (deceased). Parents: Ben and Anna Miller Detweiler. Children: Gary, Rhonda Brubaker; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 1 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Miller, Nova Jean Wertz, 74, Pigeon, Mich., died May 27 of cancer. Spouse: Durward "Butch" H. Miller (deceased). Parents: Joseph L. and Orpha V. Stevanus Wertz. Children: Margie Clement, Sheldon, Darlene Hoffman; seven grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Miller, Ruth Kathryn Mishler, 93, Shipshewana, Ind., died April 24. Spouse: Ernest Miller. Parents: Homer and Lydia Miller Mishler. Children: Dewayne J., Gerald Keith, Jennifer Kay, Franklin J., Ralph Edward, Dennis Kalb; eight grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Peters, Erna Friesen, 90, Henderson, Neb., died May 8. Spouse: Jacob A. Peters (deceased). Parents: Henry K. and Katherine Friesen Friesen. Children: Dennis, Burton, LaVera Gross; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Preheim, Henry, Jr., 86, Marion, S.D., died May 31. Spouse: Hazel Kaufman Preheim. Parents: Henry P., Sr., and Dora Gering Preheim. Children: Jerilyn Wuertz, Connie Jo Tschetter, Jim; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Preheim, Mylo J., 95, Freeman, S.D., died June 4. Spouse: Dorothy Louise Jensen Preheim. Parents: Jacob P. and Mary Waltner Preheim. Children: Greg, Cheryl Koch, Patricia Batchellar; six grandchildren. Funeral: June 13 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Reed, Esther Louise Berky, 83, Staten Island, N.Y., died March 1. Spouse: Colin Reed. Children: Noel Berky Reed, Alyson Reed, Annie Reed. Funeral: March 5 at Christ Church, New Brighton, N.Y.

Reschly, Orlin Daniel, 81, West Chester, Iowa, died June 10. Spouse: Wilda Jean Chorpening Reschly. Parents: Harry and Fannie Conrad Reschly. Children: Daniel, Rachel Roth; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 14 at Wellman Mennonite Church, Wellman, Iowa.

Rush, Robert W., 67, Plumsteadville, Pa., died July 1. Parents: Raymond M. and Sallie K. Leatherman Rush. Funeral: July 11 at Deep Run East Mennonite Church, Perkasie, Pa.

Schudel, Jody R. Knepp, 31, Kalona, Iowa, died June 6 of cancer. Parents: Edward and Bea Hershberger Knepp. Funeral: June 10 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Sempira, Lenora Dietzel, 82, Atlanta, Ga., died June 1. Spouse: Eriabu K. Sempira (deceased). Parents: Sanuel and Elma Dietzel. Children: Nasali, Carol. A memorial service is planned for the fall at the College Mennonite Church Memorial Garden, Goshen, Ind.

Steiner, Lester, 88, Dalton, Ohio, died May 6. Spouse: Irene Mae Lehman Steiner. Parents: Menno S. and Sarah Nussbaum Steiner. Children: Agnes Steiner, Bruce; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 9 at Sonnenburg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Tyson, Beatrice B. Derstine, 83, Souderton, Pa., died July 13 of sclerosis of the liver. Spouse: Paul K. Tyson (deceased). Parents: Roland D. and Sallie M. Bergey Derstine. Children: Gary, Randy, Jeffrey; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 18 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Waltner, Willard, 101, Freeman, S.D., died May 10. Spouse: Florence Adelia Leigh Waltner (deceased). Parents: Emil J. and Mary Goering Waltner. Children: Winona Senner, Dianne Epp; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Weaver, Grace E., 95, Spring City, Pa., died April 24. Parents: Jonas A. and Emma Kolb Weaver. Funeral: April 28 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City.

Whitermore, Rev. David M., 82, Wichita, Kan., entered heaven's gate July 7, 2011. He was born Sept. 12, 1928 in Belgian Congo, Africa, to Frederick and Mildred Yost Whitermore. His service to the Lord included: missionary in Trinidad West Indies; church planter for the General Conference Mennonite Church; pastor in Pennsylvania, Kansas and Arizona; Chicago Area Mennonite Coordinator; Executive Director of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago. On March 14, 1976 he married Debra Suderman. She survives of Wichita including children: Martha Dillon, David J., Mark; four grandchildren. David's celebration of life service will be held Aug. 6 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan. Memorials may be sent to the Hopi Mission School in care of Buhler Mortuary, 120 N. Main, Buhler, KS 67522.

Waidelich, Marvin D., 85, Archbold, Ohio, died July 9. Spouse: Arvilla Gingerich Waidelich (deceased). Spouse: Letha Nofziger Waidelich (deceased). Parents: Arthur and Vera Nofzinger Waidelich. Children: Susan Lantz, Bette Dahl, Rex, Jay, Lee; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 19 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Wismer, Elsie B. Freed, 95, Souderton, Pa., died June 23. Spouse: Abram H. Wismer (deceased). Parents: Allen G. and Alverda Brunner Freed. Children: Paul, Kathryn Nice, Dorothy Detweiler; six grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 26 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Yoder, Edward John, 86, Parnell, Iowa, died July 12. Spouse: Sarah Ellen Kauffman Yoder. Parents: John M. and Nancy Guengerich Yoder. Children: Galen, Michael, Steven, Philip, Saralyn Yoder; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Yoder, Ellen L. Miller, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died July 9. Spouse: Duane E. Yoder. Parents: Sherman and Emma Miller Miller. Children: LaVerta Butterbaugh, Jerry, Susan Gingerich, Jane Borntrager, Miller, Verle, Colette Ferguson, 16 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 13 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Carlton Eugene, 73, Goshen, Ind., died May 31 of accidental drowning. Spouse: Janice Stahley Yoder. Parents: Paul and Ruth Burkholder Yoder. Children: Bryan, Nate, Todd, Lynette Singleton; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Yoder, Orpha B. Schauf, 91, Wellman, Iowa, died March 15 of a heart attack. Spouse: Ralph Yoder (deceased). Parents: Edward and Roseanna Kelley Schauf. Children: Roseanna Yoder, Becki Miller, Robert L.; one grandchild. Funeral: March 17 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Make a difference in the world.

Study Public Health at Bluffton University.

Classes begin fall of 2011.

bluffton.edu/publichealth

Available digitally

TM DIGITAL EDITION

The Mennonite is now available in a **digital edition** you can read on your computer screen or tablet.

To sign up, e-mail editor@themennonite.org or call 800-790-2498.

TheMennonite
A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011
be the BRIDGE

RESOURCES

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life by Richard Rohr (Jossey-Bass, 2011, $19.95) describes "falling" as a letting go, a surrender to the mercy of God.

What Will Happen to Me? by Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz and Howard Zehr (Good Books, 2010, $14.95) present portraits of American children who have at least one incarcerated parent.

Sharing Possessions: What Faith Demands by Luke Timothy Johnson (Eerdmans, 2011, $18.99) seeks to clarify and define the ambiguous concept of human possession—especially in relation to God's divine ownership—and to discern the Bible's teaching on the mystery of human possessing and possessiveness.

Dwelling with Philippians: A Conversation with Scripture through Image and Word by Elizabeth Steele Halstead, Paul Detterman, Joyce Borger and John D. Witvliet (Eerdmans, 2010, $21.99) illumines Paul's letter to the Philippians through juxtapositions of visual images, poetry and other worship-related arts with theological reflections, prayers and more.

Amish Values for Your Family by Suzanne Woods Fisher (Revell, 2011, $12.99) shows how to adopt the wisdom of the Amish when it comes to family matters. It includes true stories and biblical advice about parenting, marriage and all aspects of family life.

Poetry in America by Julia Picher Kasdorf (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011, $14.95) is the Mennonite poet's latest collection. One of the book's poems appeared in *The Mennonite*.

Abundant Simplicity: Discovering the Unhurried Rhythms of Grace by Jan Johnson (InterVarsity Press, 2011, $15) sees simplicity not as efficiency but as a way to make space for treasuring God's own self.

1, 2, 3 John by J.E. McDermond (Herald Press, 2011, $24.99) is the 24th volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series. This volume argues that the Christian life has two fundamental markers: acceptance of Jesus Christ's role in God's plan of salvation and the need to practice love in interactions with other believers.

To See History Doxologically: History and Holiness in John Howard Yoder's Ecclesiology by J. Alexander Sider (Eerdmans, 2011, $28) examines Yoder's eschatology and ecclesiology in conversation with Oliver O'Donovan, Ernst Troeltsch, Miroslav Volf and others. Sider shows how Yoder's thought redefines the church's holiness not as something earned or possessed by its own virtue but as the ceaseless, ever-new gift of God.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

T	T	M	O	T	H	Y	■	J	O	H	N
W	■	A	■	H	■	E	■	U	■	■	E
E	A	T	■	O	■	A	N	D	R	E	W
E	■	T	T	M	E	S	■	A	■	■	S
V	■	H	■	A	■	T	E	S	T	■	■
E	V	T	E	S	■	■	■	■	H	■	■
■	■	A	■	■	A	R	A	M	A	T	C
E	A	S	T	■	U	■	■	■	D	■	A
E	■	■	R	■	T	H	U	N	D	E	R
B	■	■	U	■	H	■	■	■	A	■	E
B	A	R	T	H	O	E	O	M	E	W	■
A	■	■	H	E	R	E	■	■	U	■	■
E	■	T	■	R	■	V	E	S	S	E	E
U	■	W	■	O	■	T	■	E	■	■	O
S	W	O	R	O	■	■	S	A	T	N	T

Managing Director

Everence Financial (formerly MMA), a company on the cutting edge of faith-connected financial services, has a job opportunity for a premier leadership position. The Managing Director in the Michiana market leads a team of 25 highly-dedicated financial professionals who provide services ranging from personal financial planning, to employee benefits, to banking, wealth management, and charitable advising. The Michiana market is home to the corporate headquarters of Everence.

The individual hired for this key role will have significant sales experience; been highly successful in previous sales work (preferably in financial services or banking); exhibit a highly interactive, participatory, management style and place a high value on relationships; will be a player-coach bringing revenue to the team through personal sales activity. This individual will be very articulate about the connection between Christian faith and financial decisions. A bachelor's degree, strong understanding of Anabaptist faith communities and respect for Anabaptist values are required.

Everence helps individuals, organizations and congregations integrate finances with faith through a national team of advisors and representatives. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; email: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Camp Friedenswald is seeking an individual, couple or family to fill a voluntary service position as **guest host**. Position requires an outgoing and hospitable personality and good communication skills. Must be available two weekends a month plus an additional week during summer months. Housing and some meals provided. Call 269-476-9744 or e-mail info@friedenswald.org for more information.

Mennonite Mission Network has an immediate opening for a **half-time church relations associate**. Candidates must have ability to relate well with people and listen perceptively, be extroverted and externally driven to speak with church leaders about mission. Understanding of communications, resource development and fund-raising, with experience preferred. Travel one week per month is a must. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. See position description at www.Mennonitemission.net. Send a letter of interest and résumé to staffrecruitment@Mennonitemission.net.

Travel **Wonders of Australia and New Zealand** Feb. 20-March 5, 2012. Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Harbor, Christchurch, Queenstown, Mt. Cook, Auckland, Rotorua, Maori Concert and more. Basic price $4,799 from LA. Itinerary on www.**travelventuretours**.com; eebontrager@comcast.net; call 540-438-8304.

Lake Center Christian School (Hartville, Ohio) is accepting applications for a full-time position as **director of special services.** Duties include oversight and direction of all areas of special academic services for a PK-12 program enrolling 610 students. Preference will be given to applicants possessing a master's degree in special education or a master's degree in administration with significant experience in special education. For further education, please contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, at 330-877-2049, x511 or mmcmullen@lakecenterchristian.org.

Mennonite Church USA seeks a full-time **convention planning coordinator** to be a part of its convention planning team. Responsibilities include coordinating events and activities related to the biennial Mennonite Church USA convention and supervising a staff of two. For more information visit http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Home/NationalOffices/Jobs/tabid/533/Default.aspx

Janet Trevino-Elizarraraz is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Sowing love

In my marriage, we'd hit that inevitable slump that seems to hit all marriages around the seventh or eighth year. Amid the difficulties, when God speaks, it comes as water in the desert, and God's message came to me from the parable of the sower in Luke 8. During this hardship we were experiencing, we had glimpses of real connection and growth, but these moments quickly turned for the worse with just a comment or conversation topic, reminding me again of the consequences of bad sowing in my life.

My desire has been to learn to love, to love even when I don't feel like it or when I'm with a person I don't always like. Yet I realize that my work in this relationship is my own journey of seeing the rough edges in me that need softening and the blurriness that needs greater clarity. This is not the time or it would not be worth my energy to try to change my partner. That is futile. So the question that lingers is how I learn to love and live in this relationship just as it is, just as he is.

> Find the original tune that God has been playing within you. Hear that song grow in strength and courage. That may mean nurturing yourself and your relationship with the Sower.

Here I come to Luke 8, where there are birds, rocks and thorns along the way. The Spirit shows me a new way to see this passage and reveals that God is also sowing God's unconditional love in each of us, and it comes to me as a song of love. While I tune my voice to sing this love song, the enemy flies in, and unbelief makes a nest in my heart. I begin to doubt that this love is possible, that it is real, that it can be mine. My voice quivers, and I stop singing. I let it go to be taken away, and I live in doubt and loneliness. No sooner did love arrive and it was gone, and I could not reap the benefit of it in my own life, much less give it to anyone else.

The second experience I can relate to begins with love finding an open door within me, and it gives me and those around me great joy. I have moments of delight in marriage, but then the inevitable, rugged terrain of conflict, struggle, argument comes and, alas, it's gone. This love produced a new song to sing but without a strong melody, no one to sing it. It had nothing to sustain its life.

The last of the depressing conditions I've found within my marriage are the thorns that arise. He and I have been able to reconcile the initial problems that were once obstacles to our intimacy, and we find our house becoming a home anew, but soon enough, the deeper issues arise—the concerns of this life, the worries, cares, riches and pleasures reveal the great divide within us, and our love does not mature. It's as if we join in song, have the same song, then suddenly our songs are unrecognizable to each other, and we are no longer in unison.

Yet God's unconditional love perseveres, and God's song continues to be sung within us all if we are willing to hear, willing for love to grow in intensity and volume. We with Spirit work on tuning our ears to hear by first going to that place within. Find the original tune that God has been playing within you. Hear that song grow in strength and courage. That may mean nurturing yourself and your relationship with the Sower. Let the Sower speak to you with God's song of breath, breathe the melodies and harmonies that you need to be in greater unison for producing a song unique to you. In turn the original song between your beloved and you arises, and you become one.

This love "you hold fast with an honest and good heart, and you will bear fruit with patient endurance." It is here that I've found the answer to my question. First, instead of the enemy taking it away, I hold fast to the rhythm within me, and with all honesty and graciousness, our love song may be created. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

FILM REVIEWS

The Tree of Life (PG-13) is mesmerizing, unlike any other film showing at the cineplex. Terrence Mallick uses impressionistic images and a nonlinear narrative to explore the life of grace and the life of nature, represented respectively by Mrs. O'Brien and Mr. O'Brien, a couple in a 1950s Texas small town. Their son Jack grows up under the domineering hand of his father. Jack is a lost soul who struggles to find meaning in life and questions faith. The film is less something to watch than something to experience. It will annoy some and captivate others. I was captivated.—*Gordon Houser*

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 (PG-13) is the eighth and final film of this popular franchise that follows J. K. Rowling's magnificent seven-volume story of the boy wizard. The film emphasizes the action of the final battle between good and evil but is saved by the wonderful characters Rowling created, the older ones played in the films by some of the greatest current British actors. The Christian, even pacifist, themes in the books come through here, though the film's climax downplays Rowling's emphasis on showing mercy even to enemies.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEW

Teaching that Transforms
John D. Roth

Teaching That Transforms: Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters by John D. Roth (Herald Press, 2011, $12.99) makes the case for a church-related alternative to the public school system—one shaped by the distinctive emphases of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Roth looks at the ethos and practices of an Anabaptist-Mennonite pedagogy and at the outcomes of a Mennonite education, then considers tough questions about such education and looks to the future. He writes: "Schools committed to an Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of the Christian faith will reflect the qualities of an incarnated gospel."—*gh*

Can boring be good?

Perhaps the greatest sin in media today, according to many, is to be boring. If something doesn't grab people's attention quickly, they move on to the next image or, maybe, set of words.

We live in a fast-paced age in which many media demand our attention. We witness many people hunched over their smart phones checking a website or texting someone. We may sit at our computer or TV for a long while, but rarely are we watching or reading some piece of work for a sustained period of time.

This fast pace surrounds us and even affects our worship, perhaps one of the last vestiges of sustained attention. Even there preachers feel the pressure to make their sermons exciting (and short).

In a June 3 article in the *New York Times* called "In Defense of the Slow and Boring," Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott, film reviewers for the *Times*, discuss what is or is not boring in film and why the so-called slow and boring may be important.

They are responding to an article in the May 1 edition of *The New York Times Magazine* by Dan Kois that offers a cheerful conformist's take on what in certain circles is sometimes termed slow cinema and that he simply finds boring, the equivalent of eating his "cultural vegetables."

Instead, he, like most moviegoers, is drawn to the junk food that generally fills our cinemas. Using those terms can sound elitist, but Dargis and Scott explore the idea of boring in greater depth.

For example, Dargis writes, *The Hangover Part Two* "is the kind of boring that makes money, partly because it's the boring that many people like, want to like, insist on liking or are just used to, and partly because it's the sort of aggressively packaged boring you can't escape." She finds it "grindingly repetitive" as it features "scene after similar scene of characters staring at one another stupidly, flailing about wildly and asking what happened."

Slow, artistic films (and Dargis and Scott provide examples) may force viewers to think, and thinking is boring. They also may move us to reflect on our lives and where they're headed, and we can't have that.

Many movies work hard to entertain us so that we "won't have the time and head space to think about how crummy, inane and familiar the movie looks, and how badly written, shoddily directed and indifferently acted it is," Dargis writes.

There's an anti-art bias, Scott writes, that reflects the fact that "film has always been a popular art form, a great democratic amusement accessible to everyone and proud of its lack of aristocratic pedigree."

At the same time, we all need some vegetables on occasion. We can't live on junk food, even if it tastes good.

I like to see movies for fun, just as I like the occasional spy novel or mystery, but I also feel enriched when I encounter a film or book that challenges my notions of how things should be or helps me face a different perspective.

As Christians, we're called to prayer and to reflection, even to silence—all antithetical to our noisy, fast-paced age. Those disciplines, all part of worship, are often considered boring in our culture, yet these are part of what gives us life as we seek to follow Jesus.

Some movies, such as *The Tree of Life* (reviewed on this page), may leave us puzzled or annoyed, but we also encounter the mystery of God when we enter worship. Maybe part of our countercultural calling is to take part in boring activities and reflect on our lives as Christians.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Miriam Cochran, Hollsopple, Pa.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Jean E. Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Elizabeth & Lavina Gehman, Seville, Ohio
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Edna Goossen, North Newton, Kan.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Rachel Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Phyllis Lehman, Mt. Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Arthur Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Richard & Shirley Mast, Graham, N.C.
Erma Maust, Sarasota, Fla.
Laverna McGowen, Middlebury, Ind.
Lois Miller, Wauseon, Ohio
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Jerry Newcomer, Seville, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Carl & Ella Peters, Henderson, Neb.
Ann Regier, Madrid, Neb.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Dorcas Steider, Goshen, Ind.
Lillian Stoltzfus, Morgantown, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Jerry Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg,, Va.
Ruby Thiessen, Greenville, S.C.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Pa.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Homer & Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Joyce E. Zehr, Castorland, N.Y.

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011
be the BRIDGE
August 2011
www.TheMennonite.org

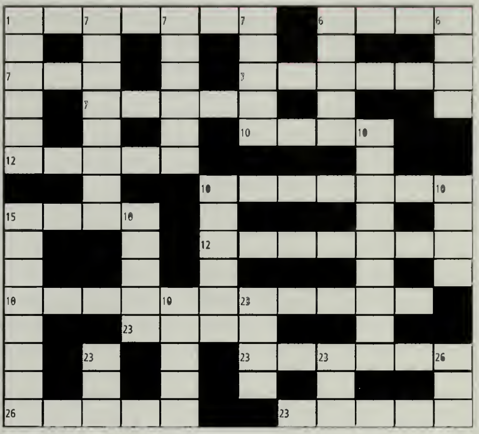
Attention pastors:
Student subscriptions

Order a six-month subscription of TheMennonite for your college and seminary students at a special rate of $24.

Send a list of students to subscriptions@themennonite.org before September 16 and your students will receive the October issue of TheMennonite.
Call 800-790-2498 with questions.

The disciples of Christ

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. His mother was Eunice; his grandmother, Lois.
5. A son of Zebedee
7. "… Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and ___; this is my body.'"
8. A fisherman from Bethsaida and brother of Simon Peter
9. Peter asked Jesus: "How many ___ shall I forgive my brother …"
10. When Jesus saw a crowd, he asked Philip where they could buy enough bread; "He asked this only to ___ him (Philip) …" (Jn. 6:6).
12. The disciples asked Jesus about clean and unclean. Jesus listed greed, malice, deceit, etc. as "___" that come from inside and make a man unclean. (Mk. 7:23)
13. Simon was renamed Peter, in Greek, or Cephas, in this language (Jn. 1:42; Jn. 19:13,17).
15. Jesus ate with his disciples in the upper room what we call the ___ Supper.
17. James and John were called the Sons of ___ . (Mk.3:17)
18. Most likely the same disciple as Nathanael (Mt. 10:3; Jn.21:2)
21. "Pointing to his disciples, he said, '___ are my mother and my brothers.'" (Mt. 12:49)
23. Peter had a vision in which a "certain ___" is descending from heaven (Acts 10:11, KJV only; the NIV lists a sheet descending).
26. Peter used this to cut off the ear of a soldier.
27. The Catholics made Peter the first pope and canonized him as a ___ .

DOWN

1. Original number of disciples.
2. The new disciple who replaced Judas Iscariot.
3. Didymus.
4. Jesus told his disciples to "Be on your guard against the ___ of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (Mt. 16:6)
5. ____ Iscariot.
6. "Go into all the world and preach the good ___ to all creation."
11. Another name for Judas, the son of James (Mt. 10:3; Lk. 6:16).
13. The apostle John may have been the ___ (writer) of the gospel, the epistles, and Revelation.
14. In the storm, the disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, don't you ___ if we drown?" (Mk. 4:38)
15. His surname was Thaddaeus (Mt. 10:3 KJV only)
16. Common phrase Jesus used with his disciples: "I tell you the ___." (Mt. 26:34)
19. King ___ Agrippa had Peter arrested and imprisoned.
20. Matthew was also called this. (Mk. 2:14)
22. Number of disciples Jesus sent to locate the upper room. (Mk. 14:13)
24. Jesus first called Simon and Andrew along the ___ of Galilee.
25. "Then they cast lots, and the ___ fell to Matthias …" (Acts 1:26)

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our October 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

September 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the puzzle can be found on page 57

(Continued from page 5)

wasn't in a leadership role. I reiterated my desire to remain on the council, was glad to hear that I was welcome, and we moved on to the work of the council. It is difficult for me to imagine that anyone would forget to tell me that "as long as he was not in an active gay relationship" was also part of the rules.

My wondering out loud was prompted by my desire to have everything on the table. I didn't want to become engaged and committed to the work of the council only later to have my role or integrity questioned or to be expelled. Since I was not part or aware of the conversations that supposedly went on before/when/after I was appointed, I was not expecting anything other than the council members' honest thoughts. For me, being gay has nothing to do with my ability to serve the church with my gifts of music, worship and pastoral ministry. And it has nothing to do with being accepted and loved by God. Obviously for other substantial groups within the denomination, it has everything to do with it.

I know that "substantial groups in the church" have wielded powerful influence in the decision to expel me. It has been frustrating being told I was welcome to serve and then being told, Sorry, you're not welcome after all. Stutzman completely leaves out the fact that I was not part of the dialogue or process that led to my dismissal until one day before my expulsion. —*Randall Spaulding, Sarasota, Fla.*

MCC's one house and two rooms

I appreciate *The Mennonite*'s interest in this story ("MCC Binational to Disband in 2012," July) and offer a word of clarification. I did say at Mennonite Central Committee's annual meeting that in the planned restructuring of MCC, both MCC Canada and MCC U.S. could decorate their "rooms" as they choose, in reference to the administration of international program. But I first said that MCC Canada and MCC U.S. would own the house together, and neither of them could make any changes to the structure or intended use of the house without the consent of the other partner.

It is only in the context of joint ownership of the whole of international program and a shared strategic plan that each national MCC can decorate its "rooms," or the programs it will supervise, as it chooses. As MCC (binational) is disbanded, the work of MCC in the name of Christ continues as always, led by Canada and the United States together.—*Arli Klassen, MCC (binational) executive director*

'They' are us

Regarding "The Effects of SB 1070" (June): I appreciated the testimonies of personal transformation and examples of vulnerability. Those who told of their experiences shared how their hearts were softened when they engaged in conversations with folks who are undocumented.

I was, however, concerned by the use of the words "they," "we" and "our" near the end of the article. The author says, "They were here in the good times to clean our houses, work as nannies for our children and maintain our yards."

These words are exclusive; they create a dichotomy that sets up one group as the norm—in this case, I assume, white, middle- to upper-class Americans—and another as outsiders (undocumented immigrants). In reality Mennonite Church USA represents much more than just white, middle- to upper-class Americans. In fact, many in Mennonite Church USA are undocumented. Therefore, let those of us in the church remember that they are really part of us, no matter which us we are.—*Andrew Clouse, Albuquerque, N.M.*

Losing peace convictions?

Are the Mennonite church peace convictions becoming history? In an April 2010 editorial entitled "At Peace with War," Everett Thomas ended his challenging piece with this paragraph: "Mennonite Church USA claims to be a historic peace church. Having made peace with war and rumors of war, we do not want our peace convictions to become history."

I wonder if our peace convictions have become one year closer to being relegated to our historical archives? Are any of us willing to wrestle again with that verse that can so easily comfort us, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's"? If Caesar were demanding our young adults, would we comfortably give them?—*Ann King-Grosh, Lancaster, Pa.*

Beck bashes Mennonites

On June 10 I was driving a company vehicle and turned on the radio station KXL in Portland, Ore. It happened to be Glenn Beck. He was talking about a college in Indiana at Goshen run by the Mennonites. He was denouncing their stance on not singing the national anthem before sports games. In a nutshell, he went on to say some disrespectful, not-so-kind things about our faith.—*O. J. Miller, Salem, Ore.*

Enjoying the last issue

Thanks for a great July issue; the whole issue has to be one of the best yet. Good editorial. It helps us all when we can compare projections of 10 years ago with actual experience since. We can learn from the past and have our feet on the ground as we listen to the Spirit for the future.—*Albert J. Meyer, Goshen, Ind.*

I am impressed with the excellent collection of articles in the July issue: Ben Kreider's "Blessings" and Jim Bertsche's "Christian Mission Is Not Exotic." In the many news items I am informed that "Peace Pastor Blog Reaches Thousands," "Bethany will Accept Tuition Vouchers" and an "Official Account of Spaulding Dismissal." Yes, an excellent collection of articles and news items. Thanks.—*Wilma Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

Investing in Hope: Empowered by the Spirit

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.—Romans 15:13 (TNIV)

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.—Vision: Healing and Hope

I've been pondering what it might look like to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." I wish it could always be said of me and all the members of Mennonite Church USA, but I fear that would be stretching the truth. In reality, we sometimes wallow in despair. From long experience, I am convinced that only the power of the Spirit can bring about a high level of joy and peace in our lives. Both the passage in Romans 15 and our statement of vision make that clear.

Admitting to God that we need more of the Spirit is an investment in hope. As we admit our need for God's empowerment in our lives, we open ourselves anew to the grace, joy and peace that God alone can bring into our lives. An optimistic personality or reliance on human strength is not the same as overflowing with hope by the power of the Spirit. The power of the Spirit is far more effective in bringing healing and hope to others. All of this points to the need for a greater emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

John Howard Yoder once said that "Pentecostalism is in our century the closest parallel to what Anabaptism was in the 16th: expanding so vigorously that it burst the bonds of its own thinking about church order, living from multiple gifts of the Spirit in the total church while holding leaders in great respect, unembarrassed by the language of the layman and the aesthetic tastes of the poor, mobile, zealously single-minded."

Other historians like Arnold Snyder have also found close parallels between the Pentecostal movement and our Mennonite faith heritage. Snyder believes that the most important trait of early Anabaptists was their emphasis on the new birth, brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is one of the reasons we are engaging in conversations with our Pentecostal brothers and sisters, not only in our neighborhoods but in Mennonite churches around the world. Many of the fastest-growing churches in Mennonite World Conference have embraced a Pentecostal approach to the spiritual life. Conrad Kanagy, author of *Road Signs for the Journey*, is documenting this in a new study based on research among churches in the global south. Like the early Anabaptists, these congregations approach the Scriptures with the expectation that the power of the Spirit will produce the same kinds of signs and wonders in our day that the early church experienced in theirs.

I believe we Mennonites have much to learn from Pentecostals about the Holy Spirit, just as we have much to learn from Mennonites in the global south. And I believe we have things to share with these other groups as well. We invest in hope as we give and receive counsel with other groups of Christians in a spirit of humility.

Mennonite Church USA is embarking on a Purposeful Plan designed to guide our church toward a fulfillment of God's call. We will only be able to meet the lofty goals in that plan if the Holy Wind of God fills our sails and carries us to God's chosen destination. Perhaps the Spirit can yet lead us to overflow with hope, so that God's healing spills over to others. I pray that it may be so. TM

Perhaps the Spirit can yet lead us to overflow with hope, so that God's healing spills over to others.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA

************************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 940 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P71
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 953
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

Three bridges from Pittsburgh 2011

Everett J. Thomas

Bridge-building and reconcilation formed the theme of Mennonite Church USA's national convention in Pittsburgh July 4-9. But the thing about bridges is, they don't move. It is those who wish to cross to the other side who do the moving.

At least three important bridges were built at Pittsburgh 2011. All three remain for those who wish to continue spanning differences.

First is the bridge to the Lutheran church built by the Lutheran World Federation with a 2010 apology for persecuting Anabaptists.

"We acknowledge we are guilty for the way we acted," Bishop Donald McCoid said to the Delegate Assembly on July 5. "[Our apology] included a message of deep love and respect and our strong prayer that we will be one."

McCoid, executive for ecumenical and interchurch relations for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, helped get the action adopted by the Lutherans. It was clear from his words that he will continue to cross the bridge in the future. For example, he said the Catholic church asked to open a dialogue with the ELCA on the meaning of baptism. He said, "Yes, but the Mennonites must be part of it."

A second bridge that will undoubtedly stay with us for a long while is something called a "Conversation Room." Staffed by skilled mediators, these rooms became the designated places for attendees to talk about controversial issues such as immigration, Israel-Palestine and human sexuality (see page 28).

"We overwhelmingly heard that the Conversation Rooms were a safe space to speak to each other," said Executive Board staff member André Gingerich Stoner on July 7. "Especially on the issue of sexuality, there was a range of perspectives, less evident on other issues."

A third bridge that surprised many was Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman's clear support of the membership guidelines and the documents established by the church in the past. After reading excerpts from the documents, Stutzman said after each one, "This is what our church has said, and this is what I believe."

What evidence is there that this is a bridge? Those on both ends of the sexuality issue are unhappy with Stutzman's position. Because the church has said in the past that we will continue with "loving dialogue" about sexuality, Stutzman intends to move foward with the tension the polarization creates. Those who want the church to simply declare that homosexual practice is sin—and stop talking about it—are not pleased with his position. Those who wish to change the church's teaching position on homosexual practice are not happy to now have an executive director who unashamedly supports the church's statements.

So the three bridges remain for us to cross. These and others are the legacy of our 2011 convention. How many of us use them in the future depends on whether we wish to be reconciled to sisters and brothers in the church on the other side.—*ejt*

Bridges don't move. It's those who wish to cross to the other side who do the moving.

Thanks, Ed

It was providential that Ed Diller served as Mennonite Church USA's moderator for the past two years. Apparently The 2011 Delegate Assembly thought so also; they gave him a spirited standing ovation at the conclusion of the convention.

"We give thanks for moderator Ed Diller," the Resolutions Committee said on July 8, "with his focus, calm, humor, grace, humility and willingness to learn."

During his watch, Ed worked with three different executive directors, helped the church navigate the wounding decision to hold our 2013 convention in Phoenix, and steered an anxious delegate body into calmer waters (see page 18).

Thanks, Ed.—*ejt*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

The Mennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02004629 9

Submission to servanthood

Dr. D.J. McFadden serves in Holmes County, Ohio.

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN

September 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE

- The anatomy of a rural church
- The day after bin Laden died
- Church and the 2-year-old
- What's in a name?
- Fresh questions about social media

Mennonite
Church
USA

It's who we are.

Photo: David Fisher Fast/Mennonite Mission Network

Servant Project participants, Joshua Sauder and Amanda Bouwman of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, install shelves at Hot Metal Bridge faith community during the Pittsburgh 2011 convention.

When Pittsburgh mayor, Luke Ravenstahl issued a "Proclamation" honoring Mennonite youth for their thousands of volunteer hours given to the city, it gave us pause. We often don't stop to appreciate the profound impact our emphasis on service has on both recipients and those engaged in serving.

We believe and teach that that serving is a normal part of what following Jesus means.

Participating in a Servant Project is just one of the formational experiences provided for thousands of Mennonite youth during convention—in addition to the many faith-shaping opportunites found in worship, small groups, Bible studies, seminars, recreation, making new friends and much more.

Mennonite Church USA thanks the additional thousands of parents, friends, pastors and others who worked so hard to help our youth attend Pittsburgh 2011.

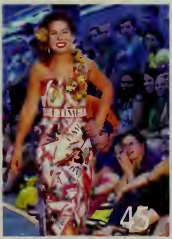
Being shaped and formed in the image of Christ. It's who we are—together.

Visit **www.MennoniteUSA.org/convention** to see the proclamation issued by Mayor Ravenstahl.

BRIDGES TO THE CROSS

Pittsburgh 2011

TheMennonite September 2011 | Volume 14, Number 9



ON THE COVER: Photo by Denice Rovira Hazlett

CONTENTS

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN

12 Submission to servanthood —Denice Rovira Hazlett
16 The anatomy of a rural church —S. Roy Kaufman
20 Rural and urban ministry —Brett Klingenberg and Joel Shenk
22 Peace: God's agenda for earth, not heaven —Marlin Birkey
24 Generic peace? —D. Lowell Nissley
25 The day after bin Laden died —Kathleen Kern
26 Wrestling a blessing —Vicki Penner
28 Children and prayer —Carrie Martens
31 Two remarkable visits —Eugene Souder
32 Three Scriptures God has used in my life —J. Lester Brubaker
37 MC USA agencies trim budgets to make ends meet
38 9/11: 10 years later—Anna Groff
45 *TIME* wa(i)sted at EMU trash fashion show —Mike Zucconi
46 America's outrageous war economy—E. Daniel Riehl

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
46 News Analysis
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
September 2011 | Volume 14, Number 9

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: Everett J. Thomas
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Gordon Houser
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Anna Groff
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller
Design: Dee Birkey

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite Church USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Music was dangerously loud

From St. Louis 1999 to Pittsburgh 2011, I've attended the U.S. conventions with the youth of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church—with the exception of 2001, when we attended the Canadian convention in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Conventions are wonderful, faith-building experiences for both youth and sponsors.

As with previous conventions, youth and sponsors attending the Pittsburgh convention were on the go from early in the morning until late at night. We were exhausted by the end of the week, but that was our choice.

Not so regarding the worship music at the Pittsburgh youth worship services. The worship band played loud enough to compromise the hearing of those in the worship services. If you have to shout to talk to the person next to you, you're likely in a potentially dangerous situation. What you lose won't come back. The only way to prevent hearing loss is to turn down the volume or provide earplugs, which is how I survived.

What matters is what's best for our youth. They want to sing hymns in their worship services along with praise songs, and we should make sure the volume is turned down enough to prevent hearing loss. It's up to us to provide our youth with a variety of experiences that lead them to faith in Christ and in safety.*—Laura Richards, Lombard, Ill.*

Response from convention staff

Thank you for your faithful attendance at our national conventions. I trust by your attendance record you have found the convention week to be an enjoyable one overall.

Regarding the music volume: At each service our sound technicians check the decibel levels to make sure they are within the OSHA safety guidelines. We, like you, care deeply for our denomination's youth. In the future we will continue to monitor sound levels for our services and will explore other options, such as providing ear plugs, identifying reduced decibel zones and better communicating with our youth sponsors.

Regarding the music selection: We have more than 6,700 youth and adults who attend our biennial convention. Each convention we hear complaints about the hymn-to-contemporary music ratio. No matter what the song distribution, someone is unhappy. We connect regularly with conference youth ministers and youth ministry professionals across the country in order to stay current on youth issues, including what type of worship experience they expect. We do this to ensure we have meaningful worship services that connect not only to the majority of the youth or the youth of a certain region but to create an environment in which youth have a chance to connect and further strengthen their relationship with Christ and Mennonite Church USA.*—Marty Lehman for convention planning staff*

Talk about sex

I went down with my youth from Floradale (Ontario) Mennonite to the Mennonite Church USA convention in Pittsburgh, and it was incredible in every way. I applaud the organizers because everything ran so smoothly. The music, speakers, seminars, events and even the food were great, and it all ran without a hitch. All except one thing: There were no seminars for the youth on the topic of sex and sexuality.

We told our youth that they needed

to go to a minimum of three seminars. As they were looking for seminars that interested them, they were unable to find any that dealt with sexuality in any manner. So I went through the schedule to see if they had just missed it. To my surprise, there was none to be found. The only ones at the conference on sexuality were for the youth leaders. So I attended one of these, held by Keith Graber Miller, called "Creating a Faithful Sexual Counter-Culture."

For the past four or five conferences, the sex seminars have been the most popular, but this year they cut these seminars altogether. This was a terrible decision.

We are not talking about sex and sexuality in our home congregations, and I feel the perfect spot for difficult topics would be at a conference such as this, with educated and competent speakers such a Keith Graber Miller. *—Jared Redekop, Floradale, Ontario*

The middle has been silenced

Editor's note: *We reserve the right to publish letters with names withheld, at our discretion (see box on page 4). We concluded that the following writer would suffer reprisals from activists—at both ends of the continuum on LGBT inclusion in Mennonite Church USA—if her identity became known.*

There are many voices speaking about the gay issue. But there is a perspective that has been silenced: It is from the voices of those who live with same-sex attraction but have chosen celibacy or fidelity to their heterosexual spouse. For the most part, they are silent as they study in our Mennonite institutions, live, work, struggle and serve with us in many venues of our congregational and community lives.

Same-gender attraction is not understood by the larger church. If one chooses his/her orientation, the issue can easily be slotted into a choice to walk in the biblical model. But when it seems to be there without the individual's choice, the issue becomes increasingly complex.

I grew up in a large Mennonite community, attended and/or worked at five Mennonite educational institutions and have lived in multiple Menno-pockets. Along my journey, some of these friends and acquaintances have shared their stories. They understand the rigorous, moment-by-moment relinquishment of self to a higher Being. They often walk alone as they bear repeated lashes of invalidation and abandonment by well-meaning "gatekeepers" of the faith—as well as the torment of the voices who champion justification of the gay and lesbian lifestyles.

These people are worthy recipients of love, acceptance and encouragement from the heart of Christ and those of us who desire to be his disciples. I for one stand in humble salute of them, for I doubt that the price of my obedience has been nearly so high.*—A compassionate friend*

Comments were political

In the July issue, under Miscellany, compiled by Gordon Houser, I was surprised to find quotes from Robert Reich's blog suggesting we need to spend more to revive the economy instead of cutting the deficit and progressive taxation. I understand that this is Reich's belief. I just find it strange that it is published as a concept for us to consider. I thought our focus was on "more with less" and encouraging fiscal responsibility. Reich's comments are political, and we are called to search for the theological principles.*—Robert Martz, Topeka, Ind.*

We do have global partnerships

In Everett Thomas' July editorial, one unmet expectation for Mennonite Church USA caught my eye: "partnerships with 10 other national Mennonite church bodies." While those partnerships did not materialize, I celebrate

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

September 11 marks the 10-year anniversary of one of this country's most traumatic experiences: the Sept. 11, 2001, destruction of the Twin Towers in New York City and the attack on the Pentagon. In response, associate editor Anna Groff wrote two articles that focus on the experience then and afterward by Mennonites in New York City (pages 38 and 39). We also publish a reflection by Kathleen Kern (page 25) entitled, "The Day After bin Laden Died."

War and peace are on the minds of other writers, as well. E. Daniel Riehl provides sobering statistics about what our country spends on war in "America's Outrageous War Economy" (page 46). On the other hand, D. Lowell Nissley (page 24) and Eugene Souder (page 36) write about peace in their articles.

Our lead news story (page 37) brings mixed news about how well Mennonite Church USA agencies fared during their last fiscal years. Those who rely heavily on contributions were especially affected by fewer contributions. The Executive Board finished its fiscal year with a $313, 218 deficit, and Mennonite Mission Network was under budget in contributions by more than $500,000.

In spite of such sad and sobering news, we are delighted with our cover story on D.J. McFadden. Torn between careers in ministry or medicine, D.J. combines both in his obstetrics practice in rural Holmes County, Ohio.

Finally, the editorial by Groff takes a fresh look at the challenges of social media. She introduces the New Media Project, which has sparked theological questions such as: Can we wash feet with Twitter? What about Communion?*—Editor*

Publishing building sold in Scottdale, Pa.

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The former longtime Mennonite publishing building in Scottdale, Pa., will reopen as a church facility. MennoMedia, the newly merged church agency based in Harrisonburg, sold the landmark building to a local congregation, Wellspring Church, on Aug. 12.

MennoMedia occupies the former Third Way Media building in Harrisonburg.

Some 103 years of Mennonite publishing in Scottdale, a small town east of Pittsburgh, came to an end on June 30. At one time, 175 people worked in the building.

Wellspring Church, located in nearby Dawson, plans to use the building for worship and outreach. The church will also rent space to small businesses and ministries.

One business that has been a longtime renter in the building and which plans to stay is the Scottdale branch of what is now Everence Financial, a credit union.—*MennoMedia*

Decision not to discipline pastor stands at WDC

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Western District Conference delegates on July 30 turned away a challenge to a decision not to discipline a pastor for officiating at a same-sex covenant ceremony.

By a 152-to-22 vote, delegates upheld the moderator's ruling that a motion to overturn the decision was out of order.

Michael Entz of Hydro, Okla., moved that the Executive Committee overrule the Leadership Commission and discipline Joanna Harader, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kan.

Last September, Harader performed a covenant ceremony for two women who are not part of the congregation. Kansas bans same-sex marriage, so the ceremony had no legal standing.

Mennonite Church USA's 2001 membership guidelines forbid pastors to lead same-sex ceremonies. The guidelines require a conference to review the credentials of a pastor who breaks the rule.

The Western District Leadership Commission conducted a review and on a 4-to-2 vote found Harader's credentials "in order."

Entz challenged the decision during the conference's annual assembly July 30. He spoke for his congregation, Bethel Mennonite Church of Hydro, which sent a letter saying the conference had betrayed its trust.

The letter called for Harader's credentials to be revoked and for the commission members who voted not to discipline her to be removed.

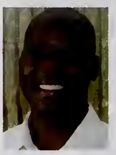
Moderator Doug Penner ruled Entz's motion out of order because a 2009 policy requires that resolutions on important issues be presented in time for congregations to process them first. —*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Photo provided

Fixing up camp

Christine Hildebrand and Abbey Froese from Manitoba work on staining the outside of the Rocky Ridge cabin at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp. This summer, Mennonite Disaster Service and the Hesston College Disaster Management program joined Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in creating a month-long youth project site. Three youth groups served a week term at the camp providing necessary fire mitigation efforts as well as some other smaller building projects.—*MDS*

Nelson Okanya named new EMM president



LANCASTER, Pa.—The Eastern Mennonite Missions board of directors has appointed Nelson Okanya as the next president of EMM, beginning Oct. 1, 2011. Okanya succeeds Richard Showalter, who is retiring after 17 years of service as EMM president.

Okanya brings a unique blend of experiences—including theological education, pastoral leadership, and cross-cultural missions—that makes him especially suited for serving EMM and its partners in this leadership role.

Born and raised in Kenya, Okanya attended Daystar University in Nairobi. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and is taking doctoral classes at Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

From 2006 to 2010, Okanya served as associate pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship in Maryland, and earlier this year he became the lead pastor. He concludes his service there in September.—*EMM*

Bluffton exceeds campaign goal

BLUFFTON, Ohio—A successful fiscal year that ended June 30 helped Bluffton University to a groundbreaking start for 2011-12.

During the 2010-11 year, the university surpassed its goal of $30 million in gifts and pledges to Extending Our Reach—The Campaign for Bluffton, with nearly a year left to go. The more than $30.5 million that has been raised to date during the multiyear campaign includes $14 million-plus for Bluffton's planned Health and Fitness Education Center (HFEC). Groundbreaking was

Everett Thomas

Elkhart building projected to be done in December

Construction of the new Mennonite Church USA office building in Elkhart, Ind., is proceeding. The building is adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart. Completion date is projected for December.—*Everett Thomas*

celebrated on campus July 12, and construction is under way.—*Bluffton University*

Mast named conference minister for Allegheny

MT. PLEASANT, Pa.—Allegheny Mennonite Conference affirmed Donna Mast, Scottdale, Pa., as its full-time conference minister Aug. 5-7 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. Mast received an 89 percent vote.

For the past two years Mast has served half-time as interim conference minister. She begins a three-year term Sept. 1.—*Carolyn Tice*

Bethel student dies after skateboarding accident

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College students, staff and faculty mourned the loss of senior Seth Dunn, who died Aug. 1 after a skateboarding accident. Dunn, 20, was from Fresno, Calif., and was vacationing with his family in the beach resort town of Cayucos, Calif.

Bethel College students held a eulogy service for Dunn on Aug. 5. Funeral services for Dunn were held Aug. 10 at North Fresno Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation.

Besides his parents, Dunn is survived by two brothers, Eli and Isaac. —*Bethel College*

CPT worker injured in attack in West Bank

HEBRON, West Bank—On July 27, masked settlers from the Havat Ma'on outpost, armed with stones and an iron bar, harassed three Palestinian shepherds and attacked two international observers. The shepherds were out with their flocks on Palestinian land near Meshaha hill when the four masked settlers attacked them. They got away, but the settlers then hit Joe Wyse, a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), in the head with an iron bar and destroyed his camera. He went to the hospital in Yatta and received eight stitches. Wyse, a Mennonite from Ohio, is also a 2006 Goshen (Ind.) College graduate.—*CPT*

Gordon Kaufman, theologian, dies at 86

Gordon Kaufman, a giant among 20th century Christian theologians, died at his home in Cambridge, Mass., on July 22. Kaufman, an emeritus professor at Harvard Divinity School, was 86.

Kaufman was well known in theology circles as a theological liberal. He was also a Mennonite and an ordained minister in the General Conference Mennonite Church. His father, E.G. Kaufman (also a theologian) was longtime president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.—*Ted Grimsrud*

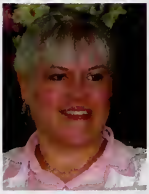
Mennonite women give $12,097 to endowment

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Rhoda Keener accepted a check for $12,097.20 designated as seed money for the Mennonite Women USA endowment fund at the organization's dinner on July 5 at Mennonite Church USA's biennial convention. The contribution honored Keener's 10 years of service to MW USA as executive director and her 60th birthday.

More than 260 women attended the event.—*Mennonite Women USA*

July 21–26, 2015
dates for the next Mennonite World Conference assembly, to be held in Harrisburg, Pa.

What's a missional church to do?



Donna Mast served half-time as a pastor at Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church and has now been called as conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

As I write, Pittsburgh 2011 is still pretty fresh in my memory. But by the time you read this, two months will have elapsed since the biennial gathering of Mennonite Church USA members. One of the things I took away from Pittsburgh is that we are still grappling with the term missional.

Since Pittsburgh 2011, I have begun to read my way through Alan and Eleanor Krieder's book *Worship and Mission After Christendom*, a 2011 Herald Press release. I wasn't far into the book when I read this sentence, "Christians propagating the gospel far from their home cultures were engaged in mission, but Christians advocating their faith closer to home were engaged in evangelism." I wondered if these distinctives could help us with the term missional.

I have heard some good Mennonites voice their discomfort with the idea of being evangelistic. It seems to conjure up images of a heavy-handed winning-souls-for-Christ and filling-up-the-church-pews without a deep caring for the whole person. Besides, aren't we to be the "quiet in the land"?

While missionaries are held in high esteem, I've also heard some discomfort about the effects of missionaries who go into all the world, creating new Christians while changing their cultures to mimic white, North American society.

An effective missionary pays attention to what God is already doing … where they are and finds ways to enter in. So does a missional person. The biggest difference is that a missional person doesn't need a passport.

So let's face it, we like it that Jesus promised to always be with us, but we are not always so keen on the part about going into all the world making disciples, teaching them to obey Jesus' commands (Matthew 28:19-20).

Certainly we take Jesus' commands seriously, and we greatly admire those who do evangelism and mission well, but most of us are not all that comfortable with doing it ourselves. And then along comes this term missional. We're not sure what it means, but we think it may have something to do with stuff we're already uncomfortable with.

Maybe we've made it too complicated. Maybe it would help us to name what we appreciate when we've seen mission and evangelism done well. For me, it happens when people who love God and take Jesus' commands seriously pay attention in a holistic way to those who have yet to know Jesus. They care about the complete person—body, mind and spirit—and take time to understand the person's culture, respecting what is good in that culture as they introduce the person to Jesus.

There was a time when those who were involved in the close-to-home evangelism part of Jesus' Great Commission did not need to think a whole lot about culture. We spoke of Jesus changing lives, but the predominant culture was Christian, right? Well, that's just not true these days—if it ever really was.

Enter the term missional. An effective missionary pays attention to what God is already doing in the people, land and culture where they are and finds ways to enter in. So does a missional person. The biggest difference is that a missional person doesn't need a passport.

My congregation had an opportunity to join in something God was already doing in Pittsburgh. We became aware of a struggling refugee church in the city that was in need of a van. God was already at work among them. We were given the opportunity to join in by raising the needed funds to purchase the van. But it wasn't merely a financial outlay. Relationships are developing. They have worshipped with us and would like us to worship with them. The pastor said to me, "Your people don't realize what they've done for us. In giving the van, you have given our church life." My response to him was that we, too, have been enlivened with a sense of purpose. God knew we needed to join in God's activity just as much as the other church needed a van.

Isn't that the way God so often works—far beyond what we could dream or imagine. Bring on the missional activity. TM

The landscape of prayer

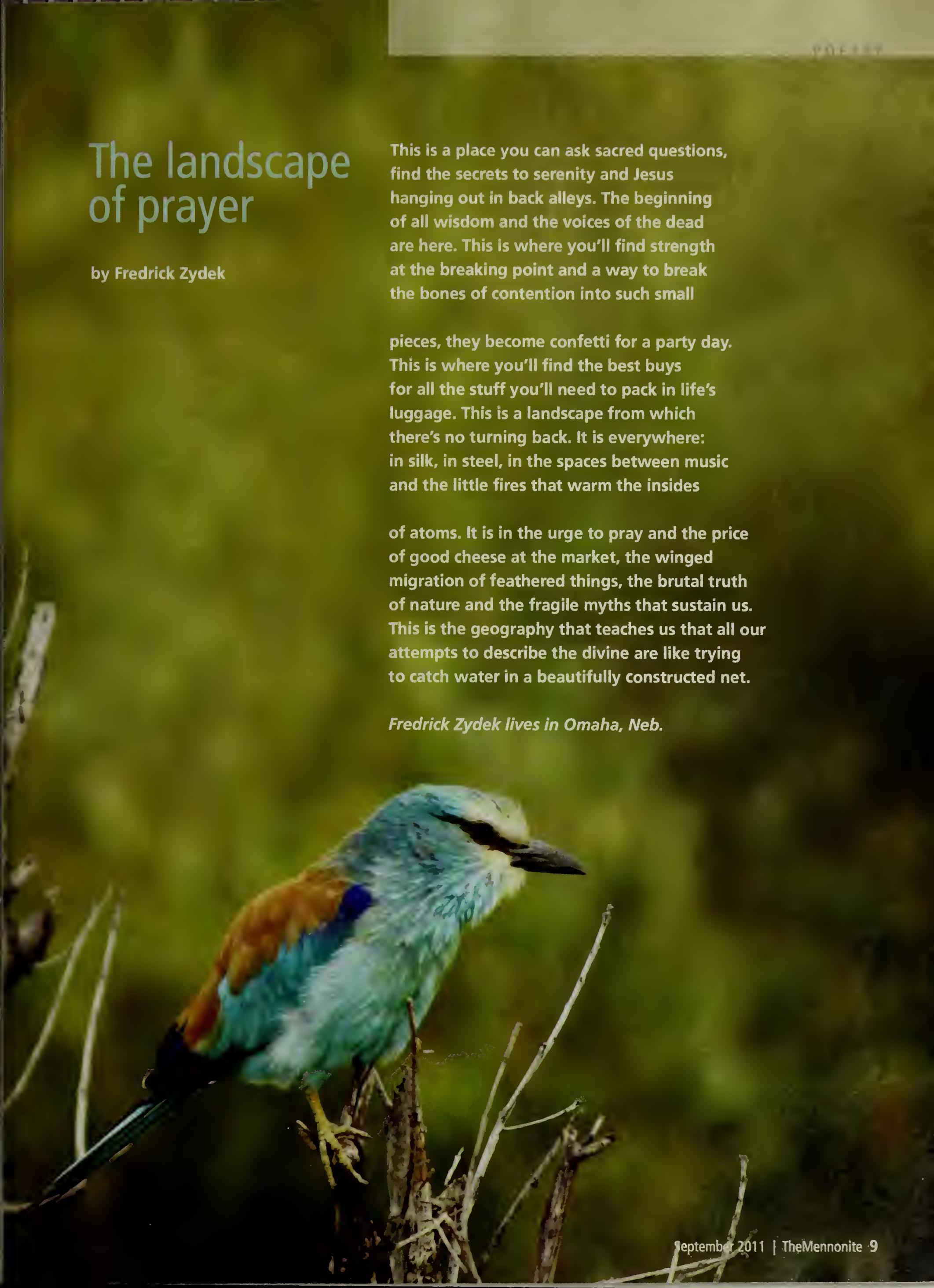
by Fredrick Zydek

This is a place you can ask sacred questions,
find the secrets to serenity and Jesus
hanging out in back alleys. The beginning
of all wisdom and the voices of the dead
are here. This is where you'll find strength
at the breaking point and a way to break
the bones of contention into such small

pieces, they become confetti for a party day.
This is where you'll find the best buys
for all the stuff you'll need to pack in life's
luggage. This is a landscape from which
there's no turning back. It is everywhere:
in silk, in steel, in the spaces between music
and the little fires that warm the insides

of atoms. It is in the urge to pray and the price
of good cheese at the market, the winged
migration of feathered things, the brutal truth
of nature and the fragile myths that sustain us.
This is the geography that teaches us that all our
attempts to describe the divine are like trying
to catch water in a beautifully constructed net.

Fredrick Zydek lives in Omaha, Neb.



Are we willing to invest in the education of our children?

It's that time of year when students begin a new school year. Across the United States, schools are under fire, with calls to cut more and more from their budgets. The Center on Education Policy reports that 70 percent of school districts nationwide endured budget cuts in the school year that just ended, and 84 percent anticipate cuts this year.

In these tough economic times—unless you're a billionaire—maybe it's good to ask about priorities. In a July 16 piece in the *New York Times*, Nicholas Kristof writes, "The United States supports schools in Afghanistan because we know that education is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to build a country." Then why, he asks, do we not do the same at home?

Kristof notes that "a prime factor in America's rise over the last two centuries was its leadership in educating the masses." Having reported on poverty around the world, he goes on to note that "perhaps the anti-poverty program with the very best record is education—and that's as true in New York as it is in Nigeria."

No one argues that education reform is not needed and throwing money at a broken system is not the answer. However, as Derek Bok, the former Harvard president, has observed, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Many have proposed ideas for reform. One interesting one comes from Susan Engel, author of *Red Flags or Red Herrings: Predicting Who Your Child Will Become*, who says we need to rethink the very nature of high school itself.

"We want young people to become independent and capable," she writes in a *New York Times* piece back in March, "yet we structure their days to the minute and give them few opportunities to do anything but answer multiple-choice questions, follow instructions and memorize information. We cast social interaction as an impediment to learning, yet all evidence points to the huge role it plays in their psychological development."

Engel describes an experiment in which a group of eight public high school students, aged 15 to 17, in western Massachusetts designed and ran their own school within a school. They called it the Independent Project.

The students also designed their own curriculum, which often turned out to be more demanding than what had existed.

Engel writes: "The students in the Independent Project … demonstrate the kinds of learning and personal growth that are possible when teenagers feel ownership of their high school experience, when they learn things that matter to them and when they learn together. In such a setting, school capitalizes on rather than thwarts the intensity and engagement that teenagers usually reserve for sports, protest or friendship."

She concludes: "Perhaps children don't need another reform imposed on them. Instead, they need to be the authors of their own education."

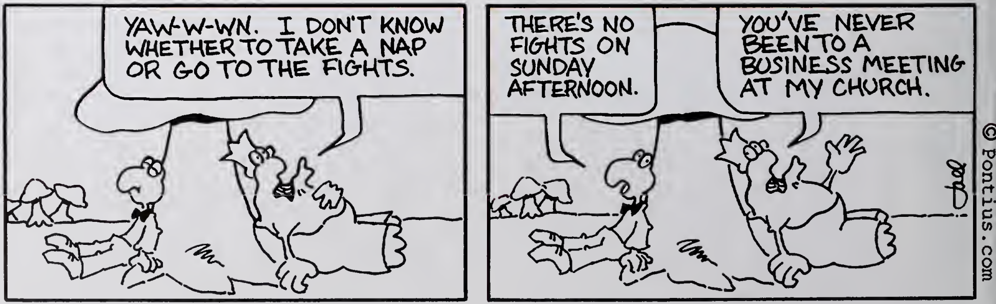
That's just one idea. Dave Eggers and Nínive Clements Calegari, in another *Times* piece in April, note that "the average teacher's pay is on par with that of a toll taker or bartender. Teachers make 14 percent less than professionals in other occupations that require similar levels of education." We get what we pay for.

Kristof asks: "How is it that we can afford to double our military budget since 9/11, can afford the carried-interest tax loophole for billionaires, can afford billions of dollars in givebacks to oil and gas companies, yet can't afford to invest in our kids' futures?"

The message seems clear: Education is not as much a priority as are those other areas. And forever cutting funds only makes us more ignorant.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


YAW-W-WN. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO TAKE A NAP OR GO TO THE FIGHTS.
THERE'S NO FIGHTS ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON.
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO A BUSINESS MEETING AT MY CHURCH.
Joel
© Pontius.com

> “The presumption that Christianity is a family-friendly faith is a small-change perversion of the gospel when compared with the use of faith in God to underwrite American pretensions that we are a Christian nation possessing righteousness other nations lack.—*Stanley Hauerwas in* Working with Words: On Learning to Speak Christian”

Scientific consensus

The main trouble with science coverage, suggest historians of science Naomi Oreskes and Eric Conway in their 2010 book *Merchants of Doubt*, is not that science journalists are insufficiently respectful of scientific consensus but that they insufficiently understand that consensus is all science ever provides. “History shows us clearly that science does not provide certainty. It does not provide proof,” they write. “It only provides the consensus of experts, based on the organized accumulation and scrutiny of evidence.” They show that global-warming skeptics exploit the naïve popular belief that “scientific” means “absolutely certain.”—*Columbia Journalism Review*

Drought is a creeping disaster that taxes our water

The first half of 2011 brought a raft of extreme weather, including floods, tornadoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. However, writes Alex Prud'Homme, author of *The Ripple Effect: The Fate of Fresh Water in the 21st Century*, July 16, the worst may be yet to come. He writes that “drought, unlike earthquakes, hurricanes and other rapid-moving weather, could become a permanent condition in some regions.” He writes that “climatologists call drought a ‘creeping disaster’ because its effects are not felt at once. Others compare drought to a python, which slowly and inexorably squeezes its prey to death. One major consequence of this change in climate concerns our need for water. “Growing population has increased the burden on our water supply,” Prud'Homme writes. Global demand for water is expected to increase by two-thirds by 2025, and the United Nations fears a “looming water crisis.” Prud'Homme writes that “to forestall a drought emergency, we must redefine how we think of water, value it and use it.”—*New York Times*

Wedding numbers

- Reporters, cameramen and crew that CNN assigned to Prince William and Kate Middleton's April wedding: **125**
- Hours that BBC America devoted to documentaries and TV shows related to the nuptials: **184**
- Percent of Americans who said they were “not interested” in the wedding: **65**—*Columbia Journalism Review*

Not good for babies

Each of the 268 pregnant women in a University of California at San Francisco study had 43 chemicals—including PCBs, organo-chlorine pesticides, flame retardants and phthalates—in her bloodstream.—*Sierra*

Women's church attendance falls

Women, long considered the dominant pew dwellers in the nation's churches, have shown a dramatic drop in attendance in the last two decades, a new survey shows. Since 1991, the percentage of women attending church during a typical week has decreased by 11 percentage points to 44 percent, the Barna Group reported Aug. 1.—*Religion News Service*

Solar saves money

Southern California Edison has requested approval for 20 midsize solar-photovoltaic projects, which will generate 567 gigawatt hours of clean electricity more cheaply than natural gas-fueled power plants. As solar grows—15 gigawatts of new solar-photovoltaic generating capacity were installed worldwide in 2010, doubling 2009's rate—prices continue to fall.—*Sierra*

Best fiction of the decade

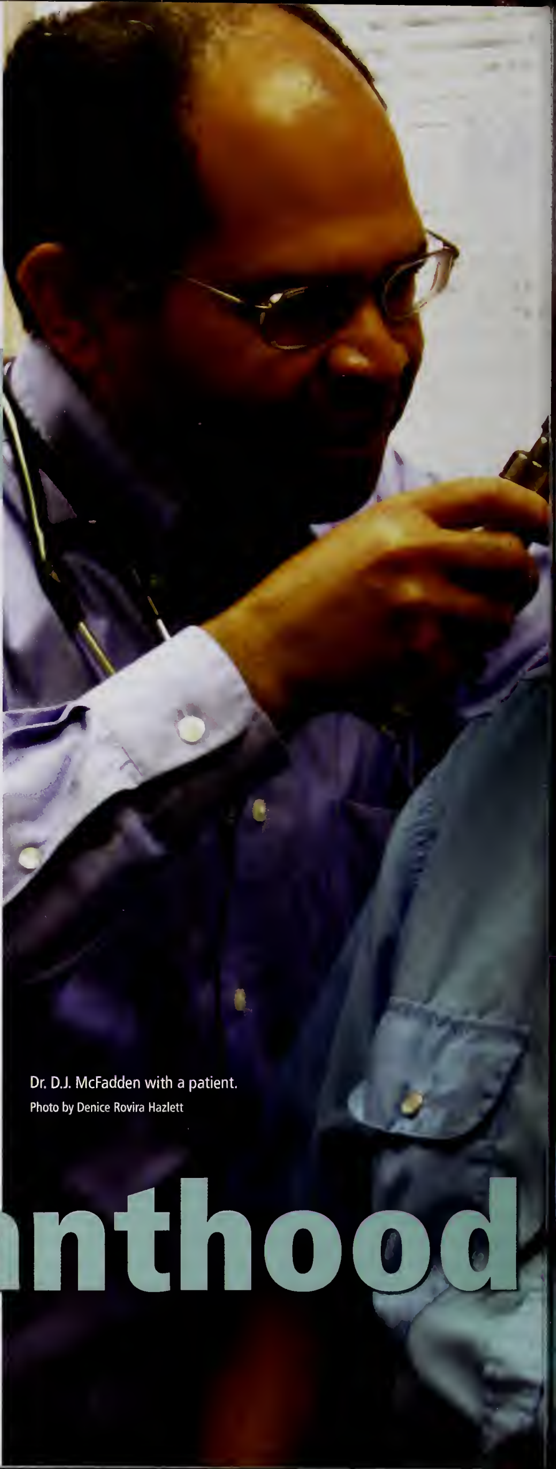
Literature professor Everett Hamner selected the following works (in chronological order) from 2000-2010 as the best fiction reflecting religious themes:

1. City of God (2000) by E.L. Doctorow
2. Life of Pi (2001) by Yann Martel
3. Y: The Last Man comic series (2003-2008) by Brian K. Vaughan, Pia Guerra and José Marzán Jr.
4. Palestine (2002) by Joe Sacco
5. The Time of Our Singing (2003) by Richard Powers
6. Gilead (2004) and Home (2008) by Marilynne Robinson
7. The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy
8. The Windup Girl (2009) by Paolo Bacigalupi
9. Three Days Before the Shooting … (2010) by Ralph Ellison
10. 36 Arguments for the Existence of God (2010) by Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

—Religion in American History blog, June 29, quoted in Christian Century

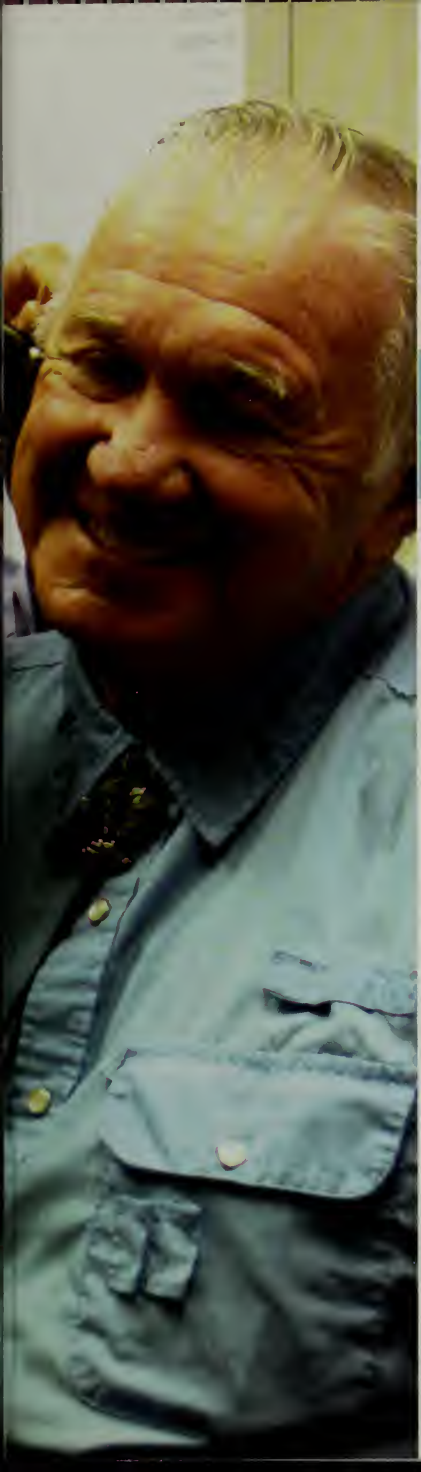
Holmes County Health Commissioner Dr. D.J. McFadden learned the hard way that when it comes to making life decisions, it's important to pay attention to your heart.

In the spring of 2005, Dr. D.J. McFadden was working in his burgeoning Millersburg, Ohio, family practice when he suddenly became dizzy and lightheaded. His medical assistant, seeing his pallor, insisted on performing an EKG. She shared the results with one of his partners and passed them on to a cardiologist, who urged the physicians to transport McFadden to the hospital to see the cardiologist. After some testing, he was treated for a stress-associated abnormal heart rhythm.


Dr. D.J. McFadden with a patient.
Photo by Denice Rovira Hazlett

Submission to servanthood

by Denice Rovira Hazlett



McFadden doesn't remember most of this chain of events, but he does remember the days leading up to it.

"I was really stressed out, not eating or sleeping, drinking a lot of caffeine, burning the candle at both ends. I'd spent four years in college, four years in medical school, three years in residency and two years in advanced training, and I was faced with this enormous decision. I was struggling like never before in my life."

The decision McFadden faced was whether to pursue the position of health commissioner of Holmes County, Ohio, where he and his family had settled, after years of building his own private practice.

What do we do as Christians with the privilege of skills and knowledge we've been given?

"Prior to moving here, the previous health commissioner, Dr. Mullet, had asked if I'd be interested in applying when he retired. I thought it would be in 10 years, … [but] two years later, he was retiring, and I was being asked to consider applying. There was no way, career-wise, that I was ready to leave my private practice."

Members of his community encouraged McFadden to pursue the opportunity. He had the necessary skills to fill the role, they said, and he had worked hard in his practice, earning the community's respect. But the most significant prodding for the change stemmed from McFadden's own reasoning. Throughout his life, his education and his career, he had wanted to be a servant.

"What do we do as Christians with the privilege of skills and knowledge we've been given? How do we use that? Do we try to enrich others with it?" McFadden had been raised to believe he should.

D.J. McFadden's father, Dwight McFadden Jr., had just completed high school as an African American in inner-city Chicago and had lived a difficult life as a child struggling through the foster-care system.

At that time, James Lark, the first black bishop in the Mennonite Church, had a vision for reaching people of African-American origin.

He saw the church pouring its resources into overseas mission and encouraged the church to greater effort in urban ministry in the United States.

As part of an effort to diversify, Goshen (Ind.) College offered inner-city ethnic minorities an education. Dwight McFadden was working in a grocery store when he learned of this opportunity to go to college.

"It was an opportunity he took, and it probably changed his life," says D.J. McFadden.

Dwight McFadden became the first in his family to earn a college degree, serving as general secretary for the Black

Dr. D.J. McFadden with a client. Photo by Denice Rovira Hazlett

Mennonite Churches before earning his master's degree in business education from the University of Notre Dame and then becoming a pastor. In 1997, he was affirmed as moderator of the Mennonite Church at the Mennonite convention in Orlando, Fla.

McFadden's mother, Joyce Good, had been part of a large family in a Mennonite home in rural Lancaster, Pa., where she helped manage the family's roadside produce stand. After high school, she performed voluntary service in Atlanta, where she worked in a pediatric ward in the 1960s during the height of the civil rights movement. There she heard Martin Luther King Jr. preach and was in Atlanta when he was assassinated. One of her life regrets was not attending King's viewing because she didn't want to miss work. Living in Atlanta, experiencing what she did at that time, greatly influenced her. She had grown up in an area where she rarely encountered people of color.

"Meeting different races and being part of a movement that combined faith and seeking justice was a life-changing event for her," says McFadden.

McFadden decided that medicine was the best option for working with others holistically.

Good took her experiences to Goshen College, where she studied nursing. It was also where she met, then married Dwight McFadden.

D.J. McFadden, the eldest of three children, grew up in Goshen and New Holland, Pa., with a love of learning and excelled in science. As a young adult entering Goshen College, he felt torn between a career in medicine and full-time ministry.

"I wanted a career that relied on science, something that helped me relate to people because I was an extrovert and really enjoyed people. It's why I went into premedical studies."

But McFadden still wasn't fully convinced which career path to follow.

Throughout his college experience, during international study in Costa Rica and during his post-college voluntary service work in St. Louis as a peaceworker, McFadden questioned whether becoming a physician would really allow him to be the servant he felt he should be. Peace work had always been important to him, and he had been greatly influenced by his mother's stories about Martin Luther King Jr., McFadden's hero from a young age.

"When I think of heroes, I think of ordinary people who do extraordinary things, who might not have the gifts and skills they need and are reluctant to take on the tasks at hand but do what they need to, even unto death. King didn't jump into the limelight; he was pushed. He has been my model for doing the right thing, led by God, continuing on because God was calling."

Torn between pursuing ministry, development work with Mennonite Central Committee and medicine, McFadden ultimately decided that medicine was the best option for working with others holistically, the best way he knew he could serve the whole person. So McFadden and his then-girlfriend, Susan Lehman, who later became his wife, settled in North Carolina during graduate school, where McFadden was accepted at Duke University as a medical student. It was there he began asking questions that his professors recognized as pertaining to public health.

"Duke requires research from their medical students during their third year, and they allowed me to get my master's degree in public health at the University of North Carolina, which they took as my research year."

That meant that when McFadden graduated from Duke, he had earned both a degree as a medical doctor and a master's degree in public health.

McFadden and Lehman moved to Holmes County after Lehman had been offered a position teaching physics after her first interview at the College of Wooster. Wooster was Lehman's first choice due to its focus on teaching, its strong research program and the caliber of students there. McFadden, who was demonstrating obstetrical procedures to lay midwives in Ecuador at the time, encouraged her to accept it.

"She said we could talk about it when I returned from Ecuador, but I told her just to tell them she would take the job. She was concerned about me, but I told her to take the position, and I would find something."

Upon returning to the states, McFadden researched Holmes County and found a perfect fit with an established medical practice in Millersburg, Ohio, that happened to be looking for someone, especially someone with special obstetrical skills. After an in-person interview, McFadden joined the practice, the couple found a house they loved, which they purchased on faith, became active members of Millersburg Mennonite church, and McFadden's practice quickly grew.

But new policies in the county restricted family physicians from performing the higher-level obstetrics that McFadden loved and had largely built his practice around.

It was a blow to McFadden's plans.

"We had a significant period of soul-searching," he says. "We had felt like doors were opening and we walked through, but now the back door was closing, and the side door was closing. I felt trapped. It was not a comfortable position."

That's when then health commissioner, Dr. Maurice Mullet, announced his retirement. For McFadden, taking the position would mean a significant pay decrease, longer on-call hours and leaving the practice he'd built and grown to love. It took much active prayer and seeking counsel from others to help him make a decision.

"Part of why I struggled so much was that I was running away," McFadden says. "I didn't want to go into uncharted territory. I felt like Moses. I didn't have the skills for this position. There were others who spoke better than me. There were others that had more leadership abilities than me. I have mixed ancestry, come from a middle-class family and had to work hard for everything I've gotten. I don't have the best pedigree. I'm not the most influential person."

But ultimately, it was because McFadden felt called, he said, in a world where most people don't have a clue what they're supposed to be doing, that caused him to realize this was the direction he needed to take.

"I felt pursued, like Jonah," he says. "It was humbling that I was being pursued. God pursues us. God cares to pursue us. I was being pursued—all of us are pursued—by a God who cares."

McFadden also felt strongly that when Christians are asked to serve, that's just what they should do.

"And that is what ultimately swayed me," he says. "I was being asked to serve the community. I wasn't being asked to be part of a business model. I wasn't being asked to be a doctor. I was being asked to serve. I couldn't resist that urge, that call that had been following me for so long. I think, 'Here am I, send me,' really stuck from a faith perspective."

As soon as McFadden made the decision to apply for the position of health commissioner, he experienced a peace and calm like he hadn't felt in a long time.

Without my understanding of God and the belief that I've been called, I would not be able to do this.—D.J. McFadden

"I know that without my understanding of God and the belief that I've been called, I would not be able to do this," he says. "But, empowered by the God I know, I'm able to attack this thing."

It's been six years since that dizzying day in his office and, to some degree, McFadden still questions his calling. His real longing, what he'd love to do as a career, is to become a stay-at-home dad to his two young sons.

"The easy thing for me would be to quit my job and stay home with the boys. I wrestle with being a good dad. I love what I'm doing, but the most important job I have is to raise my children to be responsible adults, to give them the skills, support and love they need to be fully functioning human beings and to teach them to love and serve God."

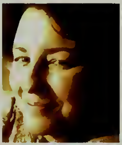
But McFadden won't be stepping down soon. He says there is still a lot of work to be done, and, along with his excellent staff, he will continue doing it.

"I went into medicine not to be a doctor; I went into medicine to be a healer," he says. "I believe you can have disease and be whole and that you can be free from disease and be really broken and sick. My goal is to help people be whole and healed in whatever their state."

McFadden keeps in his office an image of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, accompanied by a verse from Philippians that reads, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus who, being in very nature God, made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant."

"It's a reminder that I'm a servant. I serve the people of Holmes County, Ohio," he says.

And even in spite of the challenges, that's the kind of work that does D.J. McFadden's heart good.



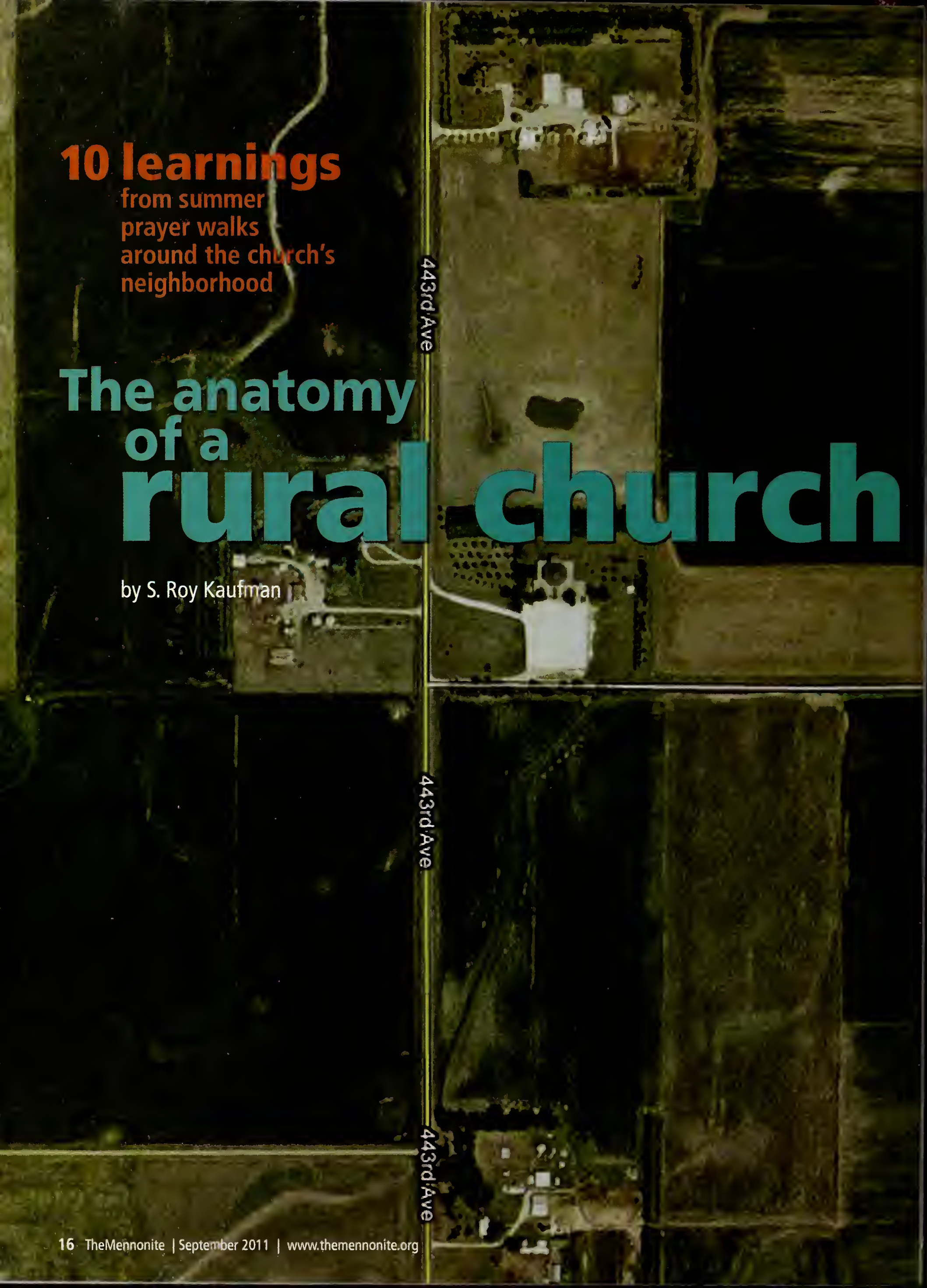
Denice Rovira Hazlett is a freelance writer and photographer in Charm, Ohio, and a member of Millersburg (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

10 learnings

from summer prayer walks around the church's neighborhood

The anatomy of a rural church

by S. Roy Kaufman


443rd Ave
443rd Ave
443rd Ave

Why prayer walks?

In the winter of 2008, I was granted a four-month sabbatical from my home congregation, Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D., where I serve as lead pastor. The theme of my sabbatical was "Renewing the Vision for Rural Ministry." I wanted to pull together what I had been learning about rural ministry for the past 36 years.

A spiritual discipline I engaged during my sabbatical was a weekly, day-long (sunrise to sunset) walk in a natural setting. After my sabbatical, I resolved to be more intentional about the spiritual discipline of walking. So I planned and led four prayer walks from June through September 2009. These were walks of eight miles around four sections in each quadrant of the church—southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast, lasting three to four hours with prayers.

Setting and context of the rural congregation. Salem Mennonite Church celebrated its centennial in 2008, having begun as an outgrowth of the original Swiss Volhynian Mennonite congregation established 2.5 miles north of Salem in 1880. This group of Amish background had come to America from the Ukraine in 1874. Salem experienced rapid growth during its first four decades, from a charter membership of 129 in 1908 to 539 in 1950. However, its decline was nearly as dramatic, declining from a peak membership of 578 in 1970 to a current membership of about 370.

The four prayer walks I led encompassed the church's immediate neighborhood, 16 square miles in the north central part of Childstown Township, with the church at the center. This neighborhood is all rural countryside. Salem Church overlooks Turkey Ridge Creek, with Turkey Ridge beyond. Two of the four prayer walks crossed Turkey Ridge Creek, and the area is traversed by north to south creeks tributary to Turkey Ridge Creek.

Southeast South Dakota was first inhabited by Native Americans, becoming the home of the Nakota Sioux nation in the 1700s. The United States "purchased" Louisiana, the Missouri/Mississippi watershed, from France in 1803. The Nakota nation ceded control of southeast South Dakota to the United States in the 1858 Yankton treaty. Turner County was surveyed in the 1860s, and Mennonites arrived in 1874.

Ministry area of Salem Mennonite Church. Prior to the prayer walks, I had identified the church's ministry area, 29 townships extending approximately 15 miles in each direction from the church. This is where most of the local membership resides, mostly in Turner and Hutchinson counties. This area has two towns of about 1,300 people and seven smaller towns. There are eight school districts, two hospitals, facilities for the aged and medical clinics, as well as rural water, rural electric and telecommunications services. There are 57 Christian congregations in this area, representing more than a dozen denominations.

The church is in Turner County, with a 2009 population of 8,237, a decline of 6.9 percent since 2000. The town of Freeman, where many members live, is in Hutchinson County, with a 2009 population of 7,124, a decline of 11.8 percent since 2000. The population density is about 10 per square mile, and the population is overwhelmingly white (98 percent), though a Hispanic minority is growing. Within a 50-mile radius of the church, there are two cities of about 14,000 each and one metropolitan area, Sioux Falls, to the northeast. This is the rural area Salem Church is called to serve in the name of Jesus.

Here are 10 learnings I gleaned in the course of the prayer walks.

1. Walk participants. I invited the congregation to participate in the four prayer walks and provided a handout describing the walk, the ▶

prayer stops, a description of the quadrant and a listing of all the members in that quadrant. Four farmers showed up and joined me for the walks. Four other men joined us on later walks, and on our last two walks, one intrepid woman. I had envisioned these as silent walks except for prayers. But I made no objection when the men began to converse as we walked. Indeed, one of the richest benefits of the walks was what we learned from one another about our community and our church.

2. Prayer walks as a spiritual discipline. Some of the individuals who participated in the walks were not likely to show up for a prayer meeting at church, but they all participated authentically in the spiritual discipline of these walks. Churches are often one-dimensional in the exercise of spiritual disciplines. The prayer walk provided an alternative spiritual discipline for those uncomfortable in conventional prayer meeting settings.

3. Praying for each member of the church family by name. There were 546 people (369 members) in our church family in 2009. I had resolved to pray for each member of the church family, pausing for prayer in proximity to their homes. It was a powerful experience to pray audibly by name for every person in our church family, sometimes acknowledging in prayer special needs and experiences members were having.

The prayer walk provided an alternative spiritual discipline for those uncomfortable in conventional prayer meeting settings.

4. The physical location of church members. We discovered that only 37 members (10 percent of the total) lived within the church's neighborhood. The bulk of our membership, 246 (66.7 percent) lived in the rest of the church's ministry area. Another 31 members (8.3 percent) lived in the 50-mile radius around the church beyond the ministry area. And the rest of the members (55, or 15 percent) were nonresident members living beyond southeast South Dakota. This location of the church's membership outside the immediate neighborhood of the church has implications for the church's ministry and ministry area.

© robynmac | Fotolia.com

5. Historical sites relevant to the congregation. Since 30 of the 110 pioneer homesteads in the East Freeman community in 1874 were in the church's neighborhood, we heard many stories about these pioneers. One pioneer homestead was the now abandoned home of my great grandfather, Christian Kaufman. He was a pastor for the first Swiss Volhynian congregation from 1878 until his death in 1906. We walked within a half-mile of the original church he served, past the site of another early Mennonite church destroyed by a storm in 1902, near the site of a breakaway church in the 1920s and through the Salem cemetery. Walking these 16 square miles put us in touch with the lives of our pioneer forebears and the history of our congregation.

As modern people we have isolated ourselves from the rigors of the weather and the rhythms of the natural world upon which our lives depend.

6. The rhythms of the natural world. Two of our walks began in foggy or drizzly weather, but we persevered. Our walks began with a Scripture reading and a prayer in Native American style, turning in each direction to give thanks for the portion of the day and the season associated with that direction—morning and spring to the east, noonday and summer to the south, evening and fall to the west, and nighttime and winter to the north. As modern people we have isolated ourselves from the rigors of the weather and the rhythms of the natural world upon which our lives depend.

7. The variety and diversity of natural life. Walking the country lanes, we could see the biodiversity of our rural community. We saw the wildflowers (and yes, weeds) and wildlife (and yes, sometimes pests). We heard the buzz of insects, the songs of birds. We became aware of the natural community of life with which our lives are bound up. We saw the effects of invasive species (including ourselves and our crops and livestock) on the land and the ecosystem, in the form of eroded land, polluted streams, natural imbalances, litter and ill health.

8. The depopulation of the rural commu-

nity. We estimated the population of these 16 square miles to be 115, or 7.2 per square mile. We identified 55 building sites where there was or had been a homestead, 3.4 homesteads per square mile, as one would expect when homesteads were made on 160 acres. A quarter of these homesteads were now abandoned. There were 40 occupied homesteads in these 16 square miles, 2.5 per square mile. Of these, 29 were operating farms, and the other 11 were rural residences, occupying what were once farmsteads. It is significant that over a quarter of the homes in the church's neighborhood were occupied by nonfarm residents we did not know well. A major challenge for the rural church is learning to know and include a more diverse population into the life of the community and the church. In 1905, the population of Turner County was 13,895; today it is 8,237. Almost half the population of the county has disappeared in the past century.

9. Losing control of the land. Using plat maps, we found that the land of these 16 sections was owned by 84 parties. Eleven parcels were rural residences, the rest agricultural. Thirty-four agricultural landholdings were rental properties, and half of these appear to be owned by absentee landlords. Whenever outside parties own the land, the community loses some control over the resource needed for the vitality of the community, for then those living in the community are no longer able to decide how land will be used. With many local farmers in their 60s and 70s, the church may have a role in facilitating the transfer of land to the next generation for the revitalization of the rural church and community.

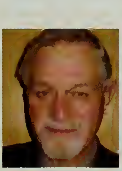
10. Diversity of land use. The dominant use of land in these 16 sections was for the production of agricultural commodities, using the methods of industrialized agriculture. There were large, multifamily dairy and cow-calf operations as well as many smaller cow-calf operations. But there were also two organic farms and a wildlife reserve. Within the larger ministry area of the church, there were berry farms, a grape vineyard, vegetable farms, intensive grazing operations, farms raising registered animals, and much more. The image of a monolithic agricultural paradigm presumed for rural communities is no longer a reality, at least here.

The prayer walks enabled us to study a specific agricultural area of a rural community—the 16 square miles surrounding Salem Mennonite Church. The result is a brief story that could be repeated thousands of times throughout North America. Pioneers came to a new land, settled it and made it fruitful; succeeding generations built up the infrastructure required for a prosperous and vital rural community; subsequent generations saw the work of these years slip from their grasp as their community and church made the radical decline of the past 40 years.

A major challenge for the rural church is learning to know and include a more diverse population into the life of the community and the church.

Rural people have always understood that stewardship of the land and the welfare of the community are at the heart of their vocation. For Mennonites, this is an ethic that was carried forward through generations of agrarian life across Europe and here into North America. Still, Mennonites acculturated to American society rapidly. Mennonites accepted citizenship and abandoned the village pattern of life. Technologies representing the industrialization of agriculture were adopted with little thought as to their effect on the community. Agricultural enterprises grew larger and required an economy of scale, resulting in the decline of the rural community we observed on these walks.

Farmers in the Freeman community want to be good stewards of their land and their community. What they lack is a communal mechanism for discerning the appropriate use of technologies for the benefit of the community. This used to be seen as the role and mission of the rural church. We might have learned from our Amish roots, for a distinctive mark of the Amish is to examine the effect a particular practice will have on the community and its welfare. Will the rural church reclaim its roots and reinvest itself corporately in the stewardship of the land and the revitalization of the community?



S. Roy Kaufman is pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D.

Correction: The caption on page 19 of the August issue about the antiracism audit team should read as follows: (left to right): Keith Regehr, Millie Fe Penner, Hannah Kurtz and Valentina Satvedi.

Brett Klingenberg and Joel Shenk are two young pastors who are excited about participating in the mission of God. Klingenberg graduated from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., in April and accepted a call to serve as pastor at First Mennonite Church in Beatrice, Neb. Joel Shenk is a recent graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., and began pastoral ministry at Toledo (Ohio) Mennonite Church in October 2010. The two met at a gathering last fall of the Anabaptist Missional Project in Lancaster, Pa., and discovered a common vision for ministry and mission despite their different contexts. In this article they report in their own words what this all means for them in their contexts.

Two young pastors on the church and mission

Rural and urban ministry

Photo provided

We need to risk our insecurities in order to invite others into a life of confession and discipleship.—Brett Klingenberg

Brett Klingenberg:
When my wife and I decided to attend the Anabaptist Mission Project (AMP) meeting in Lancaster last fall, I had no idea how important this gathering was going to be for me. With little expectation, I participated in the structured conversations and listened as people shared their convictions about what it meant for churches to be engaged and focused on mission through Jesus Christ. By the end of the weekend I had become convinced that I needed to rethink my understanding of the role of mission in the church. I now see that mission is the role of the church and that this mission can only be done with Jesus Christ as its center. I also realized that this new group of young leaders was going to be important for me as I step into a new role as pastor of a rural church.

I grew up on a farm in Kansas, and since entering seminary I have become committed to returning to the plains and serving in a rural church. It seems to me the mission trend today centers around urban ministry and church planting, which can give rural churches the sense that they aren't in a location where mission can happen. Country churches have a lot to offer, such as their strong sense of family, frequent gatherings and stability, and I think members are hungry to engage in mission and outreach. I am looking forward to returning to the country because it is where my gifts can best be used.

I also appreciate AMP because it brings together young leaders who are already working in a variety of contexts. This connects well for me because both rural and urban settings contain people who are longing for a community and connection with God, and we have the opportunity to provide that, no matter what context we are in. Both settings also require that we as the church believe that the good news of Jesus Christ is both life giving and life changing. We need to risk our insecurities in order to invite others into a life of confession and discipleship. And urban churches have a lot to teach us about flexibility and creativity. Because people are more transient and diverse in the city, churches have to be much more innovative to keep up with the changes and makeup of the community.

Being with a group of young leaders who are committed to keeping the focus on mission has challenged me to reorient my view of church leadership and direction. In many ways I already feel like AMP is a group where I can receive support, encouragement and new ideas as I step into my new role as pastor. I am looking forward to the challenge of remaining mission-focused in my new role and learning just how much I am willing to sacrifice in order to participate faithfully in mission.

Joel Shenk:
After graduating from college I spent a year serving with the PULSE program in Pittsburgh. After that, my wife and I moved to Pasadena, Calif., where I studied at Fuller Theological Seminary and worked at the Center for Anabaptist Leadership (CAL). These formative experiences challenged me to think about what it means to be God's people in the city, and I found myself energized to risk and experiment in the possibilities for mission.

Having accepted the call to Toledo Mennonite Church, I find myself challenged in new ways not just to talk theoretically about mission but to actually put it into practice through a local faith community. One of the constant refrains of Jeff Wright, my former boss and executive director of CAL, was that congregations are God's agents of mission. In the urban context, where the vestiges of Christendom have eroded, this can be quite a challenge. Churches are no longer automatically given status and authority. Yet God is still in the city, and there is evidence of God's kingdom all around if we patiently look for it without assuming we know where it is or that we have all the answers.

Photo provided

God is still in the city, and there is evidence of God's kingdom all around if we patiently look for it without assuming we know where it is or that we have all the answers.—Joel Shenk

Local faith communities have the great privilege and responsibility to be about God's mission in their contexts. To do this faithfully requires patience to exegete the community, humility to learn from the community and faith that God is already at work in the community.

Groups like AMP are instrumental for me in this regard. It's a good forum that brings together other young leaders who share a passion for mission in order to share ideas and help each other move forward. It's an opportunity to learn from other contexts while offering perspectives from your own. Without such connections it would be easy to fall back into old patterns without ever looking for where God might be up to something new.

© Brenda Zook | 2011 TM photo contest

Peace

God has a vision for the earth, that the values of God's kingdom can be lived out in human relationships.

God's agenda for earth, not heaven

by Marlin Birkey

The hope for peace in our world is to some extent dependent on hundreds of thousands of followers of Jesus adopting a different perspective on the "end of the world." The dominant Christian perspective is held in the viselike grip of premillennial dispensationalism, which teaches that the world will keep getting worse and worse until the day when Jesus returns, the saints are raptured and the predicted end-time events are set in motion, leading to the establishing of Israel as the national power and the ultimate annihilation of Israel's enemies. I'm not sure I'm ready to offer a compelling alternative end-times scenario, but I am ready to argue that the belief that the world will just continue to spiral into ▶

> If God's kingdom is indeed going to increase on earth, followers of Jesus are going to have to become convinced that God is up to more on the earth than simply getting people ready for heaven.

increasing moral and spiritual decay is contrary to the hope expressed in the advent of God's kingdom on earth through the person of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. God has a vision for the earth, a vision that the hearts of men and women can be changed and that the values of God's kingdom can be lived out in human relationships. God has a vision for the earth that repeatedly—in various times, in various people and in various ways—evil will be overcome by good, that blessings will be returned in place of insults and that the other cheek will be turned in response to violence.

If God's kingdom is indeed going to increase on earth, if God's will is going to be done on earth as it is now being done in heaven, followers of Jesus are going to have to become convinced that God is up to more on the earth than simply getting people ready for heaven. We are going to have to believe that the way we live on the earth matters and is a critical part of God's agenda for the earth. We are going to have to spend more time measuring our lives by the values and standards set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. We are going to have to understand that God has as much interest in the character of the lives we live on earth as he has in getting us to heaven.

Jesus gave his life for the vision of God's kingdom on earth. He lived by the values he taught and did not respond to violence with violence. He invested his life in teaching kingdom values to his disciples, not so that they could go to heaven when they died but so that they could carry on this kingdom work in their own lifetimes. He instructed these disciples to keep making disciples, not because that would make for more people in heaven but so that more and more people on earth would be living by kingdom values.

People are called to repent and follow Jesus not so that they can go to heaven but so that as they progressively adopt and live by kingdom values, life on this earth can get better for them and for those with whom they interact. Jesus came to the earth to make a difference on the earth. I do not wish to downplay the reality and hope of heaven and of eternal life with Christ in God's presence. I would rather think of heaven as the byproduct instead of the main focus. Life lived by the values of God's kingdom keeps getting more and more fulfilling, and then you die and find out that God saved the best for last.

Life is better for people when relationships are characterized by peace and justice. When people are treated fairly and can live without fear of violence, their lives are better. The more human relationships are characterized by peace and justice, the better life on earth will be. It is not surprising that Jesus was passionate about peace and justice. It is no mystery that Jesus expected his followers to share that passion and commit their lives to working to these ends, even sacrificing their own comfort and security to advance these causes for others. When this happens, life on earth gets better. As more and more people repent and choose to follow Jesus, it naturally follows that things on earth will get better.

Life is better for people when relationships are characterized by peace and justice.

To say we have far to go is a gross understatement. There are so many people and institutions and governments on the earth that are operating by values contrary to God's will. And the old liberalism that assumed that men and women could simply educate themselves to a higher moral and spiritual plane has been proven false throughout history. But Christian hope cannot be made contingent on the scope of the challenges that confront it. Christian hope must be rooted in the power of God, through the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives and form communities of people who are living by Sermon on the Mount values and who through their witness are challenging other people and institutions to follow Jesus' way of peace and justice.

The challenges are profound. But can't we say that the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa has made and is making life better in that nation? Can't we say that the progressive (hopefully) dismantling of racism in our nation is making life on earth better? Can't we say that courageous stands for justice in Central America have made a difference for many? Sometimes by giant leaps, sometimes by small increments and sometimes in spite of setbacks, the kingdom of God is advancing. For me, Jesus clinched the deal when he assured his followers that God is the one who is building his church, and even the gates of hell will not be strong enough to withstand its forward movement.

Marlin Birkey served as a pastor for 19 years and is currently completing a masters degree in community counseling from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kan.

Generic peace?

Many people support a generic peace but not one that costs much.

by D. Lowell Nissley

My wife and I were in the audience of a well attended (150-plus) peace meeting organized by the peace and social justice committee of a local congregation. The moderator was the associate pastor. The speaker was Fr. John Dear, a Jesuit priest. His message contained all the peace goodies dear to any serious Anabaptist heart, and it was delivered with such passion and conviction that it captured the attention and respect of the audience and would have made the Apostle Paul proud. I observed two things:

1. This church was not a sons-of-Menno church; it was Presbyterian.
2. Is the message of peace slipping through Anabaptist fingers into the hands of others?

A generic peace may make us comfortable, but only a Jesus' peace will change the world.

Many devout Christians these days are against war. They agree with Jesus about the importance of love, but many are confused. How should a responsible citizen respond to persistent evil in the world? Hitler is often cited as an example that calls for action—military if necessary. But in the case of Hitler, if the church in Germany had acted as the church, there's a good chance Hitler would have kept on hanging paper. Many people support a generic peace but not a peace that costs much. It's a peace that allows one to lock arms with God and Caesar at the same time. It keeps you out of jail but will not change the world.

At the meeting, there were maybe five Mennonites among the 150 present. At the annual community New Year's Day peace meeting, Mennonites are conspicuous by their absence.

It is understandable how some Christian folk may claim a kind of generic peace—they are nurtured in a militaristic, nationalistic culture. They grow up in families proud of their generations of military service. But for the children of Menno?

What better time than the present to talk about peace—God's brand of peace? If society could make a 180-degree turn on slavery, with thousands of years of history to the contrary, why could not a voice for peace be heard today above the battle cries for war? Consider the alternative fruit. Paul wrote to the Galatians: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." If the Spirit of God is the sower of our garden, how then can we produce death, suffering, hunger, starvation, lying, deceit, hatred, destruction—the fruits of war? Is it not incumbent upon us, who come out of a culture of peace, to be voices in the wilderness for Jesus' brand of peace?

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Does it make sense to hide under a generic basket? Jesus reminded a questioner once that love for God and neighbor upstaged even the demands of law and the hard speeches of the prophets. Love is the most powerful thing in the world. It took Jesus to the cross for the world. Why should it not take Christians to whatever forum available for peace in our world?

Not all Mennonites are sitting on their hands while the world blows itself up. Many put their lives on the line everyday in far-flung hot spots around the world, but what more should we be doing to make peace, Jesus' peace, work?

Here are some suggestions:

- Put up a peace pole.
- Hold annual peace conferences.
- Give regular sermons on peace.
- Weave peace into the educational fabric.
- Support the academic peace programs at Mennonite colleges and universities.
- Encourage passage of the Peace Tax Fund bill.

A generic peace may make us comfortable, but only a Jesus' peace will change the world.

D. Lowell Nissley is a member of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Fla.

The day after bin Laden died

Reactions to the news from people in Hebron, West Bank

by Kathleen Kern

I was in Hebron on Sept. 11, 2001. I remember old men approaching me on the street, eyes full of tears, telling me that God would help me and my fellow citizens. Other Palestinian friends called us, sobbing, as they described what they were watching on TV. The catastrophe happened at the end of a summer of egregious Israeli settler violence on the street, and we knew we had to prepare ourselves for the worldwide racist backlash against Arabs and Muslims. I think both of these factors and my grief for the victims contributed to a sense that my head and heart were creating a reaction I had not felt before and for which I had no name.

Almost 10 years later, I felt something similar when I entered our main apartment at 6:30 a.m. on May 2, and one of my team members told me that he had been listening to President Obama's speech on the killing of Osama bin Laden. The reactions of people on the street sort of flowed over me, and I examined them with interest and with that nameless feeling.

Two of my colleagues walking back from monitoring a checkpoint that morning heard an Israeli settler telling a soldier, "It's great that bin Laden was killed; CPTers should be next." A friendly Israeli border policeman at the mosque checkpoint, who assumed we would be celebrating, told another CPTer (Christian Peacemaker Teams worker) and me, "Saddam Hussein is gone; Bin Laden is gone. When we kill Nasrallah [the Secretary General of Hezbollah], Israel and the U.S. will have peace."

I told him, "There will be others to take their places."

"Then we will kill them, too," he said cheerfully.

I asked a Hebronite friend what most Palestinians in Hebron were saying about bin Laden's death. Most, he said, do not care. A small minority were upset about the killing. A much larger minority, himself included, thought bin Laden deserved his fate. The Quran forbids the killing of civilians, he said, and it has an absolute prohibition on Muslims killing other Muslims. Bin Laden was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Muslims in the United States, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan. "I just wish it had been a Muslim who killed him," he said.

For years, a Martin Luther King quotation has been taped on the wall of our apartment in Hebron. Although I am still waiting to understand my feelings, the poster brings me some comfort:

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie or establish truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Kathleen Kern of Rochester, N.Y., serves with Christian Peacemaker Teams.

My head and heart were creating a reaction I had not felt before and for which I had no name.

De Él es la Honra y la Gloria

Juan Carlos Aguilar was the 29th miner to leave the San Jose mine near Copiapo, Chile, on Oct. 13, 2010.

Photo by Hugo Infante, Government Of Chile | http://commons.wikimedia.org

Reflections on Genesis 32:22-31 and the Chilean miners

Wrestling a blessing

by Vicki Penner

Last fall, the world stood glued to the television watching the Chilean miners ascend from their underground dwelling. For 69 days the world had been working to wrestle a blessing for them. Families set up camp outside the mine and named it Camp Hope. Chilean government officials sent word worldwide to solicit help from all corners. Even here in Kansas City, Mo., an engineering firm flew their best minds from Afghanistan to Chile to work on Plan B, which would become the capsule lift used to hoist the miners from their quarters.

There was a sense that the world was struggling for this blessing of 33 human beings alive and well to rejoin their families, of father hugging son, wife hugging husband and president hugging citizen. The world struggled for this blessing. Engineers struggled to create plans to determine how to get the miners out of the ground 2,300 feet below. Machinists struggled to build the mechanisms that would do the heavy lifting. Politicians struggled to focus government resources and provide what was needed. Families struggled to maintain hope and encouragement. And last but not least, the miners struggled.

Of all those involved in this miraculous, blessed outcome, the miners wrestled the most. We can imagine the difficulty of living underground in a small space for such a long time. Yet we turn from these thoughts because we dare not imagine the stench, the boredom, the fear or the darkness in too much detail. Upon reaching the surface, one miner said, "We have seen God and we have seen Satan. God won." I'm sure there were many days when it was uncertain whether God or Satan would win, hope or despair, human ingenuity or human limitation.

The miners wrestled a blessing. The world wrestled a blessing.

In Genesis 32:22-31, Jacob, one of the founders of the Judeo-Christian faith, is on his way back to his family. We don't get the whole story in this Scripture. Our main character has been gone for quite a while. He left his brother Esau stewing about the stealing of his father's blessing. Isaac, father of Jacob and Esau, was tricked by food, hair garments and familiar smells into giving Jacob the family blessing instead of Esau. Jacob was to be the one to inherit his father's lands, animals and family authority. Esau was mad. Jacob escaped to his mother's family.

Living with Uncle Laban, Jacob worked hard, built up family and property of his

> We wrestle for maintaining health.
> We wrestle for meaning.
> We wrestle for what is right and just.
> We wrestle for hope.

own. But now it is time to return. Preparing to meet his brother, Jacob makes camp for the night. He takes his wives, maids, children and flocks across the river. They make camp there, but Jacob goes back to the other side.

The Scripture is short: "Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak." Jacob wrestled in the dark—just like the miners.

Last fall my daughter turned 13, and it brought back memories of the summer before I turned 13. That summer, my family—my dad, mom, brother and myself—wrestled for ourselves a blessing.

Dad had been experiencing headaches for the previous six months. He got dizzy on a regular basis, and one afternoon he just couldn't take it anymore. Mom took him to the hospital. After doing some tests in the ER, the doctor said he had a serious tumor on his hearing nerve and would need to go to a larger hospital for brain surgery.

Brain surgery sounds scary, and it was. As a child, I remember our family pulling together to provide support and hope for my dad. But more than that I remember my extended family and church community struggling with us. My grandparents, who were away on vacation, dropped what they were doing and drove all night to get home. The pastor of our church came to our house for prayers and support. Friends invited me to stay with them the day of my dad's surgery. My brother went to his best friend's house. Our family was mentioned every Sunday for weeks in the prayers of the people. We—our whole community—were wrestling a blessing.

We got that blessing. The tumor was benign, not cancerous. The surgeons were skilled, and there was no damage to my dad's nervous system. He recovered completely and remains an important member of our family today.

This story, like the story of Jacob wrestling in the desert, has become a story of hope and the example of God with us. We tell it regularly to each other, sometimes with a bit of humor, sometimes as an example of our values.

I suspect the story of the miners will become a similar story for the world, a story of wrestling a blessing, a story we will tell again and again as an example of reasons to keep hope alive.

How often do we wrestle in the dark? There is something about the darkness of night that brings to our minds and hearts all we are wrestling. Whether financial issues, health issues, problems with our children or problems with our parents, the anxiety of it all seems to hit in the middle of the night. We all have things we wrestle.

We are especially aware of this in the hospital, where we wrestle for ourselves, our family, our patients and each other. We wrestle for a blessing of renewed health. We wrestle for maintaining health. We wrestle for meaning. We wrestle for what is right and just. We wrestle for hope.

We wrestle hoping for a blessing, a blessing like the 33 rescued miners.

Jacob wrestled a blessing. In the middle of the dark, in the middle of the fight, Jacob refuses to give up. The one who wrestles blesses, "No longer shall you be called Jacob but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Who is this unknown wrestling partner? God? An angel? Jacob's psyche? We don't know. And it doesn't matter so much knowing that Jacob wrestled as that he didn't give up. He comes out knowing that he has seen God face to face and has survived to tell about it.

We have an opportunity to wrestle a blessing from our circumstances whatever they may be.

The miners have survived their wrestling match to tell about it. My family won their wrestling match. There are many stories of surviving hospital wrestling matches. A hospital blessing may be a complete cure, but it may also be as simple as allowing a few more months or weeks so that important work can get done—the work of making arrangements or of forgiveness. A hospital blessing may be the saving of a life through a transplant that is bittersweet because at the exact same time it is an ongoing struggle of grief and loss for a donor and their family. A hospital blessing may be a new baby. A hospital blessing may simply be a new understanding.

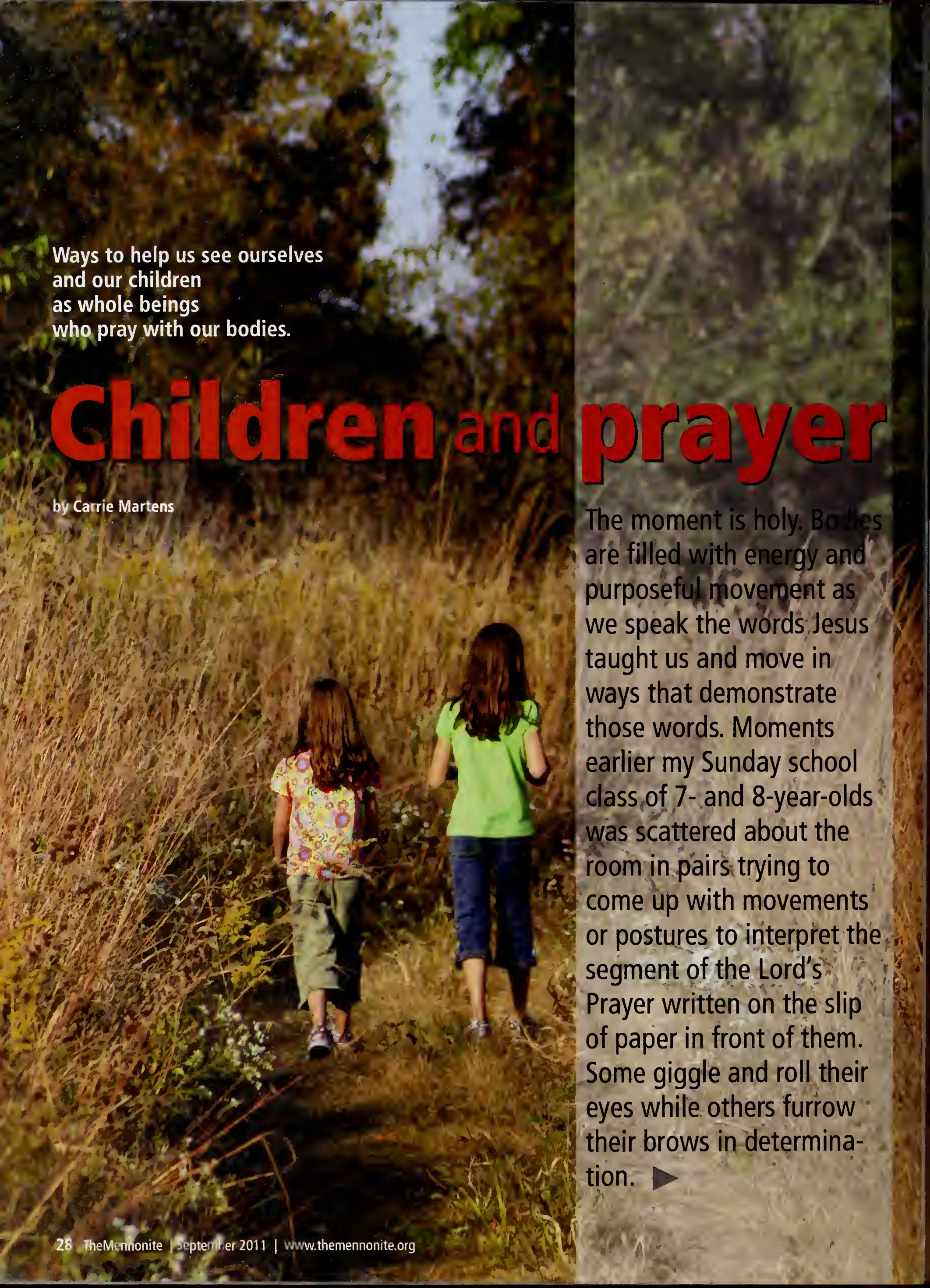
As people of faith we wrestle for blessings, whether they be big or small.

Yet even in Jacob's winning he loses—his hip is put out of joint. In the depths of the struggle we are forever marked, forever changed. For Jacob, he limps. For the miners, the recovery will include counseling, physical renewal and challenging family relationships. For my family, we recall regularly the fragility of life and how we just about lost someone we loved.

No one who lives escapes the struggles of life. No one who goes through the struggles of life remains the same. We have an opportunity to wrestle a blessing from our circumstances whatever they may be.

As people of faith, we do this with God at our side. We trust that the God who gave Jacob a blessing will in fact give one to us, too. As we delve into the darkness around or within us, we pray for a blessing. We may need to struggle to find it—but bring it on because we are ready to wrestle for a blessing.

Vicki Penner completed a Clinical Pastoral Education Residency at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., in September. She is a member of Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, Kan.



Ways to help us see ourselves
and our children
as whole beings
who pray with our bodies.

Children and prayer

by Carrie Martens

The moment is holy. Bodies are filled with energy and purposeful movement as we speak the words Jesus taught us and move in ways that demonstrate those words. Moments earlier my Sunday school class of 7- and 8-year-olds was scattered about the room in pairs trying to come up with movements or postures to interpret the segment of the Lord's Prayer written on the slip of paper in front of them. Some giggle and roll their eyes while others furrow their brows in determination. ▶

I'm surprised by the attentiveness each child gives to the exercise. Several ask questions that show they clearly want to understand the meaning behind the words Jesus gave us. As we come back together, the children listen and watch as each pair teaches the movement that will accompany these important words. Then we pray. Arms stretch heavenward, bodies bow forward, knees hit the carpet. The moment is holy as hearts, minds and bodies are directed toward the One who created us and loves us in our entirety.

In many churches the giggles and liveliness of children is seen in a negative light as adults get frustrated with squirming bodies and inappropriate noise during times of worship, prayer and silence. Children have been seen as a hindrance to adults who are attempting to focus their attention on God. However, there has been an increased recognition that children in our society have an intense yearning for silence and meditation (see *Real Kids Real Faith* by Karen Marie Yust). There is also a growing understanding that children have the capacity to enter the meditative silence of various spiritual practices and often with greater ease than some adults. The keys to helping children enter these practices are creating space and providing them with the tools and understanding necessary to connect with God in prayer.

Children have the capacity to enter the meditative silence of various spiritual practices and often with greater ease than some adults.

Many prayer practices are being recommended for children, for example: centering prayer, guided meditation, journaling, listening prayer, the examen and mindfulness. Some educators, such as Ivy Beckwith, have explored the benefits for children of adding deep breathing to their prayers in order to develop a rhythm for centering prayer, or using a prayer rope to occupy their hands and minds as they engage in the Jesus prayer (see *Formational Children's Ministry* by Ivy Beckwith).

However, as I consider the ways we engage children in prayer, I wonder if we haven't fully explored the beauty and energy that might come with using the body more fully as we enter into prayer with children, who spend so much of their time sitting at desks, in front of computers or TVs, or engaged in play that is aggressive or violent. Many of the prayer practices mentioned above are designed to help the child to become calm, relaxed, centered and still, all wonderful and necessary. Yet we can channel the energy of the child in more active ways as well.

When we learn to hear God in the movements of our bodies, then it's possible for many of our daily actions to become prayer.

Prayer practices that engage the body as well as the mind or soul help us understand ourselves as whole beings. The division of spirit and body is a common understanding in Christianity in the West. We have been influenced by Platonic thought, which sees body and soul as separate and often in opposition (see *Just Love* by Margaret A. Farley). An emphasis on the distinctness of body and soul inevitably leads to one aspect seen as superior. In the West, "the soul has been persistently valued over the body, the intellect over emotions, the will over bodily needs and desires" (Farley).

As we work to create a consistent Christian ethic in all areas of our lives (work, play, sexuality, relationships, justice issues), we see this separation of body and soul as like the separation of our beliefs from our actions. And the valuing of soul over body has also created a body-negative culture in North America, where bodies are seen as "beasts of burden" that need to be starved into thinness or whipped into shape (see *Praying with Body and Soul* by Jane E. Vennard).

If we understand our bodies and the actions of our bodies to be separate from the beliefs we hold, then we open ourselves to living lives of contradiction. Often those contradictions can go unnoticed. But when we see ourselves as whole beings, or what Farley calls "inspirited bodies, embodied spirits," then the contradictions create tension within us that is harder to ignore.

Prayer practices that involve our whole beings shape us ethically. When we pray for others in ways that involve open postures and caring gestures, we feel tension when our actions reject others or respond to them with hostility. For example, if we walk through a struggling neighborhood with children, laying hands on buildings or sidewalks in prayer, will they be able to walk past the people in those neighborhoods with indifference, or will they be moved to action because

If we as caregivers cannot enter holy spaces in our own lives, we will struggle to guide the children who so often imitate us.

their bodies have already engaged in caring gestures in that space?

In learning to see ourselves as whole beings, we need to learn to see our bodies in a different light. Consumerism and our culture's obsession with youth and beauty have contributed to body negativity, and the affects on young children, especially girls. Vennard writes about "befriending the body" as a way of finding a more "balanced approach to our embodiment." As we become friends with our bodies, we can thank God for the body given to us, consider our life a gift, make a commitment to care for that gift and consider the mystery of our bodies as well as the beauty and mystery of other bodies.

Often our discomfort with our bodies has made us reluctant to consider issues of sexuality, aging or illness in our congregations. As we are more willing to embrace ourselves as whole beings before God, perhaps we will be more able to bring all of ourselves to living the Christian life. This is not about making our bodies the center of our faith or worshipping our bodies but about finding balance.

As we become friends with our bodies, we may allow our bodies to teach us how to pray. We often think our minds or spirits are in charge of our bodies, yet our bodies can also form our beliefs and emotions. Listening carefully to our breathing or feeling our pulse can remind us of the mystery of life. It can connect us as embodied creatures to the rest of creation or to our Creator. Kneeling or lying prostrate may evoke prayers of confession, and stretching our arms wide open may help us feel gratitude and praise. And placing our bodies in positions we don't usually think of as prayerful allows us to listen to God in new ways. Such prayers can be done in groups or by ourselves, and they help us pray in different spaces and at different times. When we learn to hear God in the movements of our bodies, then it's possible for many of our daily actions to become prayer.

We have a tremendous opportunity to begin such a holistic formation with even young children. Children love to use their bodies in creative ways and are often eager to make connections between what they have heard and what their bodies can do. Here are some suggestions of how we may more fully incorporate our bodies when guiding and praying with children:

- When listening to a Bible story, ask the children to act out parts of the story, pose their bodies to show a particular scene or embody the emotions of one of the characters.
- Have the class come up with different motions for the Lord's Prayer or for various prayer movements, such as confession, intercession, praise, lament and thanksgiving.
- Encourage children to pray with music and movement as a way of expressing joy or lament. For children who are more timid or not used to dancing, provide each child with a scarf or ribbon to help them get started.
- Incorporate other items into prayers, such as a prayer rope, a sand tray or finger paint.
- Practice laying on of hands.
- Take a prayer walk and incorporate different postures in your prayers.

From this short list we can see there are many options available to us as we seek to nurture children as whole beings. However, when beginning these practices with children, we must be aware of the danger of simply creating another set of activities to keep children busy. There is a difference between bending and stretching and using postures for confession and praise. It is the responsibility of those who nurture and guide children to help them enter a contemplative space, whether quiet and reflective or energetic and joyful, in order to create a space where it is possible to meet God. Taking this responsibility seriously means recognizing we cannot guide another into a space we cannot go ourselves. If we as caregivers cannot enter holy spaces in our own lives, we will struggle to guide the children who so often imitate us.

As we seek to form the children in our congregations, let's be curious about how we may direct their energy in ways that encourage them to see themselves as whole beings and bring themselves wholly before God. And let's recognize that our starting point is not planning activities but our own spiritual formation.

Carrie Martens is a recent graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

References cited

Formational Children's Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual and Relationship by Ivy Beckwith (Baker, 2010)

Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics by Margaret A. Farley (Continuum, 2008)

Praying with Body and Soul: A Way to Intimacy with God by Jane E. Vennard (Augsburg, 1998)

Real Kids Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives by Karen Marie Yust (Jossey Bass, 2004)

An angel visits family and friends at the death of a loved one.

Two remarkable visits

by Eugene Souder

On Sept. 15, 2010, two days before the death of Betty Detweiler King at the Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Harrisonburg, Va., most of Betty and Aaron King's family were gathered around Betty's bed. They were together for what they expected would be her last hours on earth. Her children sang Betty's favorite gospel songs. Paul Swarr and Eugene Souder sang along with the King family.

Betty's husband, Aaron, was also in failing health; he had said his parting goodbyes to Betty that morning and was not present. Roy Kreider, and his wife, Florence, had spent time praying with Betty earlier that morning.

At about 5:30 p.m., there was a knock on the door. Heidi, one of Betty's five daughters, opened the door, but no one was there. Shortly afterward came another knock. This time son Michael opened the door, and again no one was there. He went up and down the hall to see if a nurse had knocked and slipped away. But no one was there.

When he returned to the room, Betty suddenly raised her right arm, opened her eyes and gazed up to the far corner of the room. Puzzling over these events, some in the family felt a sense of an angelic visitor at that moment. After that experience, Betty closed her eyes and went into a coma. Less than two days later she took her last breath. She died at 3 a.m. on Sept. 17.

A second appearance happened at the Kreiders' home in Broadway, Va., early that morning. Something woke Roy 30 minutes before Betty died.

"At 2:30 a.m. on Sept. 17, I awoke, recalling those final hours of prayer in what we all knew to be Betty's final hours of life with us," Roy says. "I felt urged to pray again for the Lord's peace for Betty and his comfort for Aaron and each of the family. At 3 a.m. a picture came clearly in view: Florence and I were sitting together in conversation with a guest. The guest said [our] words had ministered encouragement and comfort to Betty's spirit. I asked this guest, 'How could this be known with such certainty? Are you one of [the hospital's] medical personnel?' "

> I saw a most beautiful and youthful-looking Betty, radiant with the light of Jesus.—Roy Kreider

Roy was startled by her answer.

"I am not a staff person," she said to Roy. "I am the angel commissioned by God at the time of Betty's birth to be her lifelong guardian angel. At this moment, Betty is being released from her physical body. Also, now someone very special to you is about to enter the room."

The visitor was Betty.

"Betty appeared, and I saw a most beautiful and youthful-looking Betty," Roy says, "radiant with the light of Jesus. Betty sat with Florence, me and the angel, with Betty expressing to us her gratitude for the spiritually enriching friendship—those many faith-strengthening conversations and the many prayers across the years. She continued to speak blessings on us. She asked us to pray for Aaron and the family. Then she said, 'In an instant

(Continued on page 33) ▶

Photography by Luanne Harnes

Three Scriptures God has used in my life

Each has spoken to a different decade of life.

by J. Lester Brubaker

I knew I was accepting assignments that were too big for me, but I went ahead.

Although I have never had a life verse, God used three different Scripture verses to speak to me in three different decades of my life.

The first verse the Lord clearly brought to my attention in the 1950s, when I was in my 40s and head of the education department at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va. I had just been awarded my doctoral degree from the University of Virginia and was doing some adjunct teaching for the university. My passion was working with colleagues to develop a cutting-edge teacher preparation program at EMC in line with the innovative standards of the profession. EMC was being recognized as a front-runner among Virginia's private colleges. I held positions in several state organizations and encouraged students in achieving offices in their state body. I knew I was accepting assignments that were too big for me, but I went ahead. Then one day, as I was reading in Jeremiah, the Lord made verse five of chapter 45 (JKV) stand out: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." Shortly thereafter I received an invitation to become principal of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School, which I accepted as guidance from the Lord even though many people seemed confounded by my accepting a "lower" position by going from college work to high school. Although I faced a variety of temptations along the way, the Lord has continued using this verse as a stabilizing influence on my life.

The second scriptural gift the Lord gave me was in the 1970s, when I was serving as administrator of Lancaster Mennonite High School. On this particular occasion, faculty member Louise Showalter was in charge of the morning chapel service. She asked several colleagues to read assigned Scripture verses, to which she then added brief commentary. The verse she gave me to read was Ecclesiastes 5:5, KJV: "Better is it thou shouldest not vow than though shouldest vow and not keep." Somehow that verse made a lasting impression on me, perhaps because when I was a young boy my father, who loved trains—a love he apparently passed on to me—promised he would sometime take my two brothers and me on a train ride around the famous Horseshoe Curve near Altoona, Pa. That "sometime" never came, and I was disappointed in a promise not kept. Although I have tried to be faithful in keeping promises, I know that I have sometimes failed.

In our society, vows seem to be easily broken, even marriage vows or vows to Christ and the church. Promises quickly slide off our lips, then just as quickly are forgotten. But they are not so easily forgotten by the one to whom the promise was made. Broken promises can hurt—sometimes deeply. I am grateful for the way the Lord used this Scripture in my life as a reminder not to make glib or pressured promises that will likely not be kept. By God's grace, I have tried to make fewer promises and to hold in faithful remembrance those I do make.

The third Scripture the Lord has used strongly in my life came to me in about 1985, when I was in my 60s. How or when I became aware of it, I don't know. I only know that I found these words repeated over and over in my mind: "The Lord is good to all." At the time, I wondered why these words should come to me so clearly and repeatedly; I really didn't know if they were a phrase I read or heard somewhere or if they were found in the Bible.

Then on Good Friday evening in 1986, we received a telephone call from 100 miles away that our son and daughter-in-law had been involved in a serious accident that fatally injured them both. In the aftermath of that experience, I felt compelled to take my concordance and determine whether or not those words are actually in the Bible. I found them in Psalm 145:9—and then I understood. Our all-knowing Lord was preparing me for this tragedy by bringing those words to me months in advance. I firmly believe God is not a great manipulator of events to make us think we are "happy"; rather God intends that we use whatever happens as an opportunity to have our hearts open to know a strength that is beyond our own and to see the good that exists in the midst of the bad.

At the right time in my life, the Lord used three short verses from the Bible to speak to my need and to grant me an eternal blessing.

J. Lester Brubaker lives in Lititz, Pa.

God intends that we use whatever happens as an opportunity to have our hearts open to know a strength that is beyond our own and to see the good that exists in the midst of the bad.

(Continued from page 31)

I will be standing in the glorious presence of God. And I will be seeing Jesus face to face. But soon we shall be gathered into his glorious presence. What a day of rejoicing that will be!'

"Then at once Betty was gone, and so was the angel. I was fully awake during this whole experience. It was several hours later on that morning that we were told of Betty's homegoing at 3 a.m., the exact time the Lord gave that awesome visual revelation. Thanks and praise to God."

Roy says no reason for this visitation was given to him. It represents a mystery sent by God.

"I'm reminded of the song," Roy says, "'God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.'"

Betty's husband, Aaron Martin King, died Jan. 3 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va.

The King family spent almost 20 years in mission service in Cuba and Mexico. After returning to Harrisonburg, Aaron and Betty worked in a Spanish-speaking ministry with Hispanics in the area. For about 30 years they were chaplains in prisons throughout Virginia and surrounding states.

Roy and Florence Kreider spent three decades representing Christ in Israel under the Mennonite Church. After returning to the United States in 1985, they were invited to serve in a counseling ministry with the Cornerstone Fellowship in Broadway, where they now live.

Eugene K. Souder, Grottoes, Va., is a lifelong quartet member with Aaron King, Paul Swarr and Roy Kreider.

A new agency faces the challenges of the day

Russ Eanes is executive director for MennoMedia.

> There is a renewed interest in and hunger for the unique values our tradition brings: peace, community, simplicity and a desire to follow Jesus in the totality of life.

From today's news: book sales in the United States are down 9 percent; Borders Books, one of the two main megastore chains in the nation, began its liquidation as part of bankruptcy; Amazon reported that sales of e-books exceeded paper copies in the previous 12 months; Apple exceeded all expectation by selling more than 9 million tablets; smart phones will soon outsell PCs; and Netflix ignited controversy by upping the price of its combination net-streaming and mail-order DVD service. It's a daunting, challenging and scary time to be in the media business.

Advances in technology have brought additional challenges: information overload, electronic addictions, shortened attention spans. Through social and interactive media, everyone is now in the information and content creation business, and many expect that the content we now consume and create should be free—or nearly so.

Combine all that with a decline in both denominational loyalty and church attendance and you may also say it's equally challenging today to be a ministry and agency of a church denomination.

Consider, then, MennoMedia, the newly merged entity created July 1 from Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media. We are facing all these challenges.

We are a nonprofit, multimedia company owned by the Mennonite churches in the United States and Canada. We bring together the experience of more than 100 years in publishing—from print media to electronic media, including radio and film—in curriculum, periodicals and the Internet.

To some we are a church ministry, to others an institutional agency. Our constituents range from conservative to liberal, with worship styles from traditional to contemporary, from folks in plain dress to folks with tattoos and piercings. We represent two distinct, though not dissimilar, nationalities—Canada and the United States—and serve people of various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Whatever the background, for members of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, we are your company, your ministry. You own us, and we are accountable to you. We serve the church both in its Anabaptist witness and spiritual formation at a time when the need for both is great and the risks of being in both media and ministry are great.

Rather than shrink from the challenges I've mentioned, we at MennoMedia want to embrace them and recognize an even greater and more hopeful opportunity. As Anabaptists and Mennonites, we find ourselves at a unique moment in history, when there is a renewed interest in and hunger for the unique values our tradition brings: peace, community, simplicity and a desire to follow Jesus in the totality of life. We have the opportunity to share these values with our culture and, indeed, with the whole world.

Recently a church leader encouraged me and all of us at the new company to take risks—an encouragement I appreciated because the new organization we have formed via merger is in itself a big risk. When I read the Scriptures and study church history, I find much that is risky, and so I find us in good company. With the support and faith of our two denominations and with vision tempered by humility, we will strive to create a top-notch media ministry/agency that brings an Anabaptist witness to the world.

Combining print, electronic, online, broadcast and digital capabilities, we can now produce content across a whole spectrum of new and emerging platforms. Our goal is for our constituents to see what we produce as being relevant to their life and faith in their particular context.

I feel privileged to collaborate with others in leading MennoMedia in our new beginning. We are a group of people with passion, experience and vision. We have melded together staff with many years of experience and wisdom and a new, younger generation with enthusiasm and fresh energy. We recognize the many challenges of faith, economics and technology in a rapidly changing culture and media environment. May we be responsive and relevant witnesses in our society while we help to create the resources you need to help you live faithfully.

MennoMedia produces books through its Herald Press imprint; hosts the online Third Way Café; produces curriculum, periodicals and hymnals through Faith and Life Resources; produces Shaping Family Radio; creates award-winning TV documentaries through Third Way Media and collaborates with Brethren Press to produce the *Gather 'Round* curriculum. TM

Church and the 2-year-old

I am one of those people who leave their Christmas decorations up past December. This mainly happens because I forget. I should also say that by Christmas decorations, I mean, our crèche. That's all I put out. I'd like to have various Christmas decorations in our house, but it comes down to two things: time, which I don't have, and the fact that my children are at ages where they would prefer to put decorations in their mouths instead of looking at them adoringly.

Last Christmas, I introduced the figures of the crèche to my children. I also let them play with the figures. My daughter often asked to play with them, especially Baby Jesus. Then one night, when they were asleep, I took the crèche down and packed it away. The next morning, my daughter asked for Baby Jesus. I told her I put Baby Jesus away but that he and all the figures would be back in December. She was disappointed but brightened up when I told her she could read about Jesus in her children's Bible.

What does faith look like for toddlers? What does going to church mean for them?

Lately, when she plays with her toys, the most common thing I hear is "getting ready for church" or "going to church." It makes me wonder what she thinks about church, about Jesus and about God. I realize she is 2, so I don't want to read too much into her play. But I wonder, What does she think of church? Is it a place for her to go to see friends in the nursery? Is it a place where she can run uninhibited among a crowd of people? Is it the place where Mommy works? What does she think when she hears stories about God and Jesus? What does she think about Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph?

I have no idea. As her mother and as a pastor, I hope she has positive feelings about church. So far she seems to enjoy going, but this may not be the case (think teenage years). But I wonder, What does faith look like for toddlers? What does going to church mean for them? Again, I don't know.

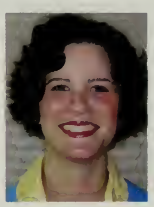
Two images come to mind: hearing her sing, "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant" from the *Hymnal Worship Book,* which she calls "Journey," and hearing her little voice join in as my husband and I sing "Great God, the Giver" as our table grace. As a Mennonite, I suppose I should not be surprised that some of her first spiritual formation has come from song.

I think these little things matter a lot in the beginnings of faith formation. While my daughter may not understand the meaning of these words right now, my hope is that these words bury themselves deep into her soul so that when she gets older the words "Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too" make her stop and think, What does it mean to be a servant? I also hope the phrase "Great God, the giver of all good" reminds her that God is good even when she faces a situation that is not good at all.

But these are my hopes, not hers. As her mother, all I can do is hope and guide her and her younger brother in faith. As I look toward the season of Advent, I have bigger plans to help us celebrate and learn as a family about the birth of Christ besides setting up our crèche. For example, I have high hopes for either creating or buying an Advent calendar as a way to anticipate and learn about the birth of Jesus. I also look forward to her growing participation in church.

In December she will turn 3, which means she can start attending some of our church's programs, such as Sunday school and children's worship. This also means she will sit up with us at church; no more nursery for her. This fall will begin a change for her, and how she views church will probably change. She will be entering the formal education phase of life, no more playing trains or playing with dolls in the nursery.

I wonder as the fall progresses if I'll still hear her say to her dolls in a cheery voice, "You're going to church."



Rachel Ringenberg Miller is pastor of community life at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Is 'peace on earth' our highest calling?

Eugene Souder is former editor of *Our Faith Digest* and lives in Grottoes, Va.

At Christmas time I saw a small angel figurine with these words: "Peace on earth." That's all it said. I'm thinking, peace among nations. But is that what was announced? Not according to the angel.

In Luke 2:14 in *The Message* by Eugene Peterson, the angel says, "Peace to all men and women on earth who please him." The NIV says, "and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." "Peace on earth" is not promised. The angel promises "peace to those who please God." There's a big difference. Full "peace on earth" awaits Christ's second coming.

Is not the supreme peace message what the angel told Joseph, "You shall call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)? That's peace.

Jesus knows that earth's peoples are minus hope without him.

The New Testament speaks of peace more than 100 times. Almost without exception it refers to peace that comes after receiving Christ. Paul says, "Christ is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). Christ is the engine and power of the Gospel Express; the cargo is love, joy, peace, "love your enemies." All this cargo is limited in power apart from Christ, the engine.

Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36). Many expected a Messiah bringing "peace on earth" to free them from Rome. That hope for "peace on earth" is here today. It's a longing we all share. But is this our highest calling?

In contrast, Jesus surprises us: "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, ... they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother" (Luke 12:51-53). Why this seeming contradiction? The answer may be that Jesus brings peace only to those who choose him. Now in the church, family and community we can experience the peace of Christ—"the wolf will lie down with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6). In the new birth, Christ transforms our natures.

Isaiah 9:6-7 says, "And he will be called the Prince of Peace." Peace and justice are his domain, enlisting us as co-workers. "Of the increase of his government (church) and peace there will be no end." Think how Christ's peace grew from few to millions today. His peace (vs. "peace on earth") is growing making us reconcilers: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Is this not our highest task until Jesus returns?

Is Jesus against world peace, or is it a matter of timing? "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but the end is still to come" (Matthew 24:6-7). Then Jesus unveils the end time: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the world ... and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Finally peace on earth arrives in full. Jesus Christ and the Father come to dwell with their people (Revelation 21:1-5). Finally no more war.

I welcome feedback, pro or con. Our primary peace message is the gospel of Jesus Christ—his life, death, resurrection and coming again. In seminary a fellow student said it isn't important that Jesus lived, just so we practice his teachings. Sounds good, but is this true? Can we live his teachings without Christ?

As Christian peacemakers we model Christ, who is the key to peacemaking. When such peace is first, more peace on earth happens. This affirms why Jesus makes sharing the gospel paramount. His final orders were, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them"(Matthew 28:16-20, John 20:21). Jesus knows that earth's peoples are minus hope without him. He also knows that peace on earth, if such were fully possible now, would in itself not bring the genuine peace (redemption) God promised. The goal of peace on earth represents what is passing; the gospel represents the eternal.

I heard of a congregation where two-thirds of its 150 members are from other than Mennonite homes. And the pastor almost always is teaching a new believer's class. Are they not fulfilling the angel's primary peace prophecy, known to us as the gospel?

Does the gospel of Christ have highest priority, or has the goal of "peace on earth" (or anything else) taken first place? Does neglecting our supreme calling encourage the declining church growth here in the West? Does this not call for our close and prayerful examination?

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MC USA agencies trim budgets to make ends meet

MC USA Executive Board, Mennonite Publishing Network experience losses.

Reports from the fiscal year ending (FYE) Jan. 31, 2011, show that, overall, Mennonite Church USA's various agencies and entities are cutting expenses in response to economic challenges, while contributions from congregations and individuals continue to decrease.

While giving to most agencies was down, several groups were able to stay ahead of the game by cutting enough expenses during the fiscal year so as to end up in the black. Those experiencing gains in net assets were Mennonite Mission Network, Everence (formerly MMA), Church Extension Services, Inc., Mennonite Health Services Alliance, The Mennonite, Inc., Mennonite Women USA and Mennonite Men. Those experiencing losses were Mennonite Publishing Network and the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

"The respected *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported that 2010 was one of the worst years for charitable contributions," says Paula Killough, senior executive for advancement for Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. "This mirrored our experience at Mission Network this past fiscal year. We were under budget in contributions by more than $500,000. This reality has required senior management to put in place a plan to reduce the budget for the following fiscal year."

Killough notes that Mission Network did experience a $1,457,118 gain in net assets in FYE 2011, "primarily due to the funds we [hold] for the Joining Together, Investing in Hope capital campaign [for the new office building in Elkhart, Ind.] and positive activity in our endowment fund." However, Mission Network's program budget and the capital campaign budget for the new building are separate.

The fiscal year for Everence, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA, ended Dec. 31, 2010. It showed a gain in net income of $1,803,172, while Church Extension Services, Inc.—which makes loans to Mennonite Church USA congregations—gained $8,597.

Everence's Mel Claassen, senior vice president and chief financial officer, says that while 2009 was a break-even year, 2010 showed a gain, "thanks to the sale of our investments in Meritas [a registered investment adviser], plus favorable results in our senior health insurance and annuity products."

Mennonite Health Services Alliance's fiscal year also ended Dec. 31, 2010. It had a gain of $64,481. MHS Alliance president Rick Stiffney said, "We had a small operating loss in FYE 2010 offset by better than anticipated investment portfolio performance."

The Mennonite, Inc., had a gain of $10,615; Mennonite Women USA, $21,822; and Mennonite Men, $5,478.

Mennonite Publishing Network, which merged with Third Way Media on July 1 to become MennoMedia—the publishing agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada—experienced a loss of $37,330 in FYE 2011. However, this represented "a huge turnaround from 2009 [a loss of $270,507]," says Russ Eanes, who became executive director of MennoMedia July 1. He notes that the five-month period leading up to the new fiscal year, which began July 1, "showed an even better performance." MennoMedia will operate with a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year.

Eanes adds that all assets of Mennonite Publishing Network were transferred to MennoMedia on July 1; the largest asset was approximately $500,000 in good inventory. He notes that the MPN building in Scottdale, Pa., was sold Aug. 12 (see page 6) for a net gain of $110,000, after fees. Also transferred to MennoMedia on July 1 were real estate, cash and equipment from Third Way Media, which was a department of Mennonite Mission Network.

The Executive Board had a loss of $313,218 in net assets in FYE 2011. Two factors in particular contributed to the loss. Some of the proceeds from the sale of a portion of Mennonite Church USA's Newton building were distributed to Mennonite Church Canada in accordance with a prior agreement. Also, a large gift annuity matured, and while the EB kept 15 percent of the total distribution based on the churchwide formula, the 85 percent remainder distributed to the program agencies and constituency groups was counted as an expenditure.

Glen Guyton, director for constituent resources for Mennonite Church USA, says that FirstFruits giving from the agencies was down compared with the prior fiscal year, as was giving from area conferences. (When the FirstFruits giving system was established in 2002 at the beginning of Mennonite Church USA, all Mennonite Church USA agencies committed to forwarding to the EB the "first fruits" of their income according to a predetermined formula. Because the agencies received less income this fiscal year, the agreed-upon formulas yielded lower portions to pass on to the EB.)

"Giving patterns have changed, and we have to adapt to these new economic times," says Guyton, noting that in response to the downturn, the five-member cabinet of the EB staff is taking a 5-percent pay cut this year. "We're trying to be good stewards of the dollars that are contributed."

A spreadsheet of the financial indicators is available online: http://www.mennoniteusa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=iI6zD604QGE%3d&tabid=270.—*Mennonite Church USA*

9/11: 10 years later

Mennonite leaders in New York City address 9/11 and bin Laden's death.

Sandra Perez remembers riding an elevated train in New York City when she saw the first building starting to collapse on Sept. 11, 2001.

Sandra Perez

"That sign is engrained in my memory," says Perez, oversight minister for Atlantic Coast Conference in New York City. "I knew right away that the U.S. was going to retaliate."

This year, when she learned of Osama bin Laden's death on May 1, she felt overwhelmed, like she did on the day of the initial attacks.

"I was just struck by the thought that we haven't learned a thing," she says.

When she got on Facebook that week, she read many hateful comments and vengeful language.

"It was painful to me," she says. "Even people that were Christian were happy and celebrating."

Perez, who calls herself a relentless advocate for peace and justice, decided to engage some of the people on Facebook who posted hateful comments.

First, she explained her belief in Jesus Christ. "He taught us ... to love your enemy and not to hate, and that revenge—forget it," she said. Often the people on Facebook didn't respond, and unfortunately the conversation did not go anywhere.

Perez says she is left wondering, Where do we go from here? However, she says she continues to do her work of peace and justice by helping those hurting from poverty and discrimination in NYC.

Ruth Yoder Wenger, who works with trauma healing and has lived in New York for 40 years, witnessed another side of the New York City response to 9/11.

Ruth Yoder Wenger

For example, she participated in a rally in Union Square against the Iraq war in 2003 where family members of 9/11 victims held signs reading, "Do not do this war in my name."

Yoder Wenger worked as project manager for Mennonite Disaster Service in New York City immediately after 9/11 and started a field office of Eastern Mennonite University's Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience based in Harrisonburg, Va. Now she is the vice president of New York Disaster Interfaith Services, pastor of North Bronx Mennonite Church and moderator of the NYC Council of Mennonite Churches.

According to Yoder Wenger, it's not a fair assumption that New Yorkers lived in fear of bin Laden for the past 10 years. "Living inside it is very different [from] being outside it [and] only hearing what the media are saying," she adds.

When working with victims of 9/11 and other disasters, Yoder Wenger uses two general concepts. First, violence will create trauma—and that applies to all people. Second, for Christians, violence isn't the Jesus way.

"People in trauma don't need to be told to forgive, especially in the thick of it," she says, adding that many people want revenge, and those feelings drive actions.

That's where caregivers and leaders aid in shaping others' actions. "How we feel does not necessarily have to get acted out," she says.

Michael Banks, bishop for the New York City Mennonite churches, says his peacemaking work began before the 9/11 attacks.

Michael Banks

"We sensed a need to reach out to the immigrant population from the Islamic world," he says, as they saw more Muslims, especially African immigrants, joining their community.

After 9/11, his church—King of Glory Tabernacle in the Bronx—created a peace hall. The peace hall served as a sanctuary for Muslims to feel safe and to host seminars and meetings for Muslims and non-Muslims to learn from one another. It continues to be a space for peace education led by Banks' wife and a pastor of King of Glory, Addie Banks.

Not every Muslim subscribes to the way of bin Laden.—Michael Banks

"[Non-Muslims] could realize that within Islam itself, there are many fractions," he says. "Not every Muslim subscribes to the way of bin Laden."

After bin Laden's death, the church offered information on Islam beyond mainstream media. Rather than celebrate his death, members acknowledged that while he had a violent viewpoint, he was also a victim of the United States.

"He became a convenient scapegoat that the U.S. could use to [distract people from] issues that were more important, like the economy and health care," Banks says.
—*Anna Groff*

9/11: countering media bias against Muslims

Timothy I. Shenk

Mel Lehman displays paintings he purchased from Iraqi refugee artists in Syria as part of Common Humanity.

Mel Lehman watched a child die in Iraq in 1996. After reading about the suffering in Iraq due to the U.S. sanctions, he decided to travel to that country, and in 2002 he returned with a medical team.

Out of those initial life-changing trips grew Common Humanity, an organization that Lehman directs and that organizes art exhibits featuring painting by Iraqi refugee artists living in Syria (see photo at left). It seeks to build connections between the United States and the Arab and Muslim world. Lehman, a member of Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship, now organizes one medical and one cultural and religious trip each year to Syria instead of Iraq.

Lehman, who worked in communications for Church World Service for 20 years, says one way to work for peace is to counter the media bias against Islam and to approach 9/11 from the Muslim and Arab point of the view.

"We see the bad in them and we don't see the good in that part of the world," he says.

Even many New Yorkers, notoriously open-minded, remain narrow-minded when it comes to Islam, he says. He believes that today Jesus would tell the story of the "Good Muslim" instead of the "Good Samaritan."

"I'm not trying to glorify Islam," he says. "I just think that it's a complex issue."—*Anna Groff*

From bashing with bats to prayer

Several days after Sept. 11, 2001, Susie, a long-term Bronx resident widely recognized in her diverse neighborhood as a community organizer, called me.

"Ruth, I need your help. I am just full of rage and hatred and anger for what those people did to us. I want to get my friends together and go out into the neighborhood with baseball bats and trash the Arab stores over on Jerome. I want to get back at them. But I can't do that now. You teach us that Jesus said we need to love our enemies. But what am I supposed to do with all the rage and anger and hatred?

I replied, "It's perfectly normal to experience all these feelings when something like this happens. Joe (a community health worker) is coming in tomorrow to do a workshop on how we as a church … can help each other and our neighbors get through this. Can you hold off for a little longer?"

"I guess I can tell my neighbors just to boycott the stores instead of trashing them," she said.

Joe's workshop included debriefing, self-reflection and active listening. He suggested three H's: Hush. Hug. Hang around. The next day, Susie put up flyers in the neighborhood inviting residents to a "prayer vigil" in a sheltered public-access walkway of the local hospital across the street from her basement apartment. Thirty people showed up, including a Muslim man who said, in tears as he removed his headpiece, "We are very sad about what happened. We just want to live in peace."—*Ruth Yoder Wenger*

A simple way to make a difference

A donor advised fund from Mennonite Foundation, an affiliate of Everence, can help you make a lasting impact on the missions and ministries you want to support. It's a simple, flexible and unique way for you to make a difference – and receive tax benefits.

Apply online in the Charitable Giving section of www.everence.com. Or, contact your Everence representative today!

Everence

2111013

Mennonite teachers called to public schools

A Q&A with a Seattle teacher and an Indiana teacher regarding public education

Tiffany Reimergartin, who attends Seattle Mennonite Church, is a third and fourth grade special education teacher for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) in the Bellevue School District. Marilyn Graber teaches English at Goshen High School and attends College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. This year she begins her 22nd year teaching.

Tiffany Reimergartin

Describe your calling to serve in a pubic school setting?

Tiffany: First, students and staff are exposed to many different lifestyles and belief systems. Second, students in the public setting often have unique needs. Many students with EBD have been kicked out of many schools and are not usually represented in private school populations.

Marilyn: The longer I teach the more I see the incredible importance of public schools. The public school must serve everyone: those who don't speak a word of English, those with severe learning abilities, those who are academically gifted, those in poverty.

Marilyn Graber

What are the most rewarding aspects of public education?

T: When I see students shift their attitude toward school to be more positive. One of my favorite parts of my job is when parents tell me that their child no longer hates school and that they don't have to fight with them each morning to get them to school.

M: GHS has a high second language population, and I teach many students who haven't been in the United States for many years. These students often make rapid progress as they master English. It is so satisfying to see their successes. However, the new testing environment is challenging. In Indiana we don't yet measure growth. So if we have students who have only been speaking English for three years and have made incredible growth yet don't pass the state exam, this is counted against us and them.

Do you see tensions between public school supporters and church school supporters? If so, how are those tensions being addressed? If not, how have the two groups come to amicable understandings?

T: Churches in our area are supportive of public schools. I appreciate that churches are helping public schools and students with no strings attached. Loving through action—rather than preaching—definitely makes public employees much more receptive to working with Christian groups.

M: In Indiana, the new voucher law, providing state funds for students attending private schools, has caused some tension. Public schools educate the most needy in our communities. Private schools do not and often cannot take these students, yet they will now be receiving state funding. I support the Mennonite institution through my church. I feel this is where support should come, not from the state. In the

(Continued on page 41)

Father Frank: Frank Albrecht works as the facilitator of student support services in the Lancaster (Pa.) School District (LSD). One way Albrecht expresses his faith in the public school setting is to offer an encouraging "thought of the day" to the other staff. These messages are faith-based but without religious language. He begins them with "Dear McCaskey Family" and closes with "Blessings, Father Albrecht."

Albrecht brings experience in the public and Mennonite education systems. Prior to teaching in LSD, Albrecht taught at New Danville (Pa.) Mennonite School.

"[Mennonite teachers] in public and private are needed," he says. "We need dedicated, radical Christians in both."

Albrecht, who began a mediation program at LSD, believes in teaching to the whole person. "Whether we are teaching in private education institutions or in public, our missions are the same," he says. However, Albrecht acknowledges the challenges teachers face with No Child Left Behind and funding based on those tests. Some teachers manage classrooms of more than 30 students, and each year the percentage of students without focus seems to increase, he says.

Many students come from families that struggle on a "number of fronts," Albrecht says. "It's hard for the students to find that motivation," he says, adding that many act as if they do not care about their grades.

Albrecht has worked for more than 20 years in the district. He attends Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster and is married to Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA.—*Anna Groff*

Ohio pastor threatened with note, nooses

Kidron Mennonite elders work for reconciliation with alleged perpetrator

On July 16, Pastor Larry Augsburger found a box containing two nooses and a threatening note written to him that was left in his office at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Augsburger, a transitional pastor at Kidron, began in October 2009. In an interview with Augsburger and several elders at Kidron on July 21, Augsburger said they prefer not to reveal the text of the note. The note twice referred to hanging and also referred to shooting. Augsburger and the elders know who committed the offense.

When the alleged perpetrator saw a July 16 article in *The Daily Record* that reported on the incident, he talked with some people in the church who were able to determine that he was the one who left the nooses and the note. They reported this information to the elders.

Larry Augsburger

The elders planned to announce the incident to the congregation on Sunday morning, July 17. However, after the article was published, the elders decided to send a church-wide e-mail to inform church members. The head elder, Gary Miller, informed the church members that, first, the newspaper article included an inaccurate quote about a "divide" at Kidron Mennonite.

"We would have to say that there has been resistance to some innovations that I've suggested as transitional pastor," Augsburger said, "but that has never been a divide in the congregation."

Miller also assured the congregation that this individual was working alone.

Augsburger was not present at the July 17 service. It was the Sunday a pastoral candidate participated in the worship service, and traditionally a transitional pastor is not present when a pastoral candidate visits. Augsburger said the reason for not attending was not because he felt threatened.

"We didn't feel that anyone was in actual physical danger," said Thomas Dunn, associate pastor of youth and young adults at Kidron, in the interview.

Two elders, Jon Fielitz and Elton Lehman, have had "significant contact" with the alleged perpetrator. On the evening of July 16, they visited him at his home to tell him they discovered he had written the note, and they have met with him several times since. The elders request that he enter counseling, and he has complied.

"For right now, we've asked him not to be present at church or on the grounds of the church," said Augsburger. Augsburger said he has not yet met with the perpetrator but plans to set up a time for reconciliation.

The sheriff's office is working with Kidron Mennonite on the congregation's terms. The elders chose to reveal the name of the alleged perpetrator to the sheriff, so his name and the incident is on record. However, the sheriff's office will not take action unless the Kidron elders make a request.

"The sheriff's department has cooperated with us wonderfully and has been willing to accept our efforts to work with the offender in an effort to bring healing and reconciliation," said Augsburger.—*Anna Groff*

Mennonite teachers *(Continued from page 40)*

past, the two high schools have worked together to some degree. In short, our relationship has been amicable. However, this new environment may change some of these feelings.

Are you able to express your faith in the classroom/office?

T: I feel completely comfortable to talk about my faith with coworkers at my school. Of course, I don't teach religion in my classroom or indoctrinate my students; it is a public setting, and I model respect for all viewpoints and faiths. However, I do feel comfortable telling students, if they ask, that I attend church.

M: It is sort of a myth that those who teach in public schools cannot express their faith. As a literature teacher, I discuss the biblical stories frequently. There are so many biblical allusions in literature you can't discuss it without giving students a biblical background.

How has your identity as a Mennonite influenced your work?

T: As a Mennonite that believes in the importance of nonviolence, I work with my students to be peaceful community members in the use of tone of voice, volume, posture, actions and anger management.

M: I try to be an advocate for students who don't have much power in the system, i.e., they have parents with no power. Adequate educational funding for all American children is really a justice issue.—*Anna Groff*

CAN LIZZIE HOLD HER SPIRITED IDENTITY IN HER QUIET *Amish* COMMUNITY . . . OR WILL SHE ALWAYS FEEL LIKE A STRANGER, EVEN IN HER OWN HOME?

An active member of the Amish church, author Linda Byler has captured the true experiences of growing up in the plain community in her bestselling novels.

Lizzie Glick—bright, competitive, and funny—embarks on a journey of love and loss in ***Running Around (and Such)***, the first book in the *Lizzie Searches for Love* series. Lizzie's sisters are getting married and settling into the traditional rhythm of having children and keeping house, but Lizzie isn't quite ready to take that step. Will she ever fit into the quiet Amish community, she wonders.

Lizzie's dream of teaching school has finally come true in ***When Strawberries Bloom***, but will she have to give up everything for marriage and family? And who will take care of Dat as his health continues to decline?

Questions and indecision, as well as answers and certainty, enter Lizzie's life in ***Big Decisions***, the third and final book in the series.

Available from your favorite bookstore or online retailer.

A novel based on true experiences from an Amish writer!
LINDA BYLER
Running Around
(and Such)
LIZZIE S
A novel based on true experiences from an Amish writer!
LINDA BYLER
When Strawberries Bloom
LIZZIE SEARCHES for LOVE
• Book 2 •
A novel based on true experiences from an Amish writer!
LINDA BYLER
BIG Decisions
LIZZIE SEARCHES for LOVE
• Book 3 •

Running Around (and Such)
Book 1 • 352 pages, $13.99
paperback

When Strawberries Bloom
Book 2 • 304 pages, $13.99
paperback

Big Decisions • Book 3
352 pages, $13.99
paperback

Good Books®

Available from your favorite bookstore or online retailer.
To order directly from the publisher, please call **800/762-7171**, ext. 221.
www.GoodBooks.com

Raising up leaders from within

Florida church plans to graduate six interns from leadership program.

Dennis Gingerich

Cape Christian interns from left: Nick Sewell, Jamie Bazerra, Stacey Frerichs, Heather Johns, Julia Hartlieb and Chuck Wheelock

The founding pastor of Cape Christian Fellowship, Dennis Gingerich, sees immense value in raising leaders within his congregation in Cape Coral, Fla. "I've always loved being able to see the potential in young leaders," says Gingerich, 57.

Out of this vision, the church began a formal internship program last year. Six individuals planned to graduate at the end of August. The program grows out of the long-term, informal culture of leadership at Cape Christian, Gingerich says.

"In our 25-year history, four times we've gone outside the congregation to bring leaders on staff. And all those experiences … had their pitfalls," he says.

Now Cape Christian leadership prefers to train leaders from within. "They already have the DNA of how we think, how we act," Gingerich says.

While he appreciates his degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., Gingerich now believes ministry training is often obtained on the job and through mentoring and coaching from mature leaders. "It's learned in the trenches," he says.

During the last 10 years, Gingerich focused on mentoring leaders within Cape Christian. In fact, he mentored the two other current pastors, Wes and Brett Furlong.

Wes brought the idea to formalize this ongoing practice, raising leadership into a program involving an application, interviews and a time commitment, as the interns give 10 hours a week to the church in their specific area.

From the first year, Cape Christian has hired two of the three interns as part-time staff at the church, although no intern is promised a position upon completion. The program, funded by the church, includes year-round classes on leadership, discipline and ministry, as well as pastoral care classes. The interns also join staff meetings and trainings.

"I believe it supports the health of the church to have a staff that is both willing to share its expertise with interns as well as receive input from them, and Cape Christian has been generous in both respects," says intern Heather Johns, who has a seminary degree.

Chuck Wheelock, another intern, used to work as a sales manager at several large car dealerships. However, last year he turned down a management job at another dealership and now works as a postal carrier, and 15 hours a week he leads volunteers that clean the church's preschool.

"I gained clarification and discernment on God's call and plan for my life," he says.

The program also provided him with the confidence to begin a Bible study in his home for new believers and graduates of the church's membership class.

Cape Christian plans to launch a two-year residency program in 2012 as another step that interns can take if they want to move toward full-time pastoral ministry, and Johns and Wheelock may join that program.

Gingerich and his wife moved to Cape Coral in 1986 and began the church as a joint church plant with Mennonite Mission Network and Southeast Mennonite Conference.

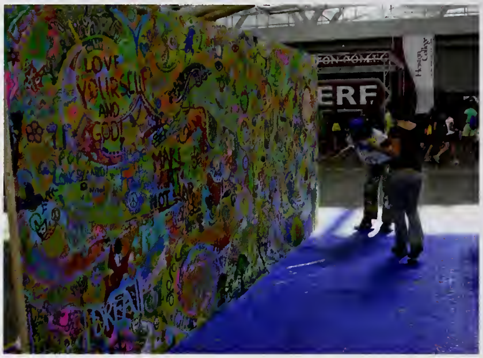
Cape Christian has an average attendance of 1,200—mostly young families and many who were unchurched. Many members grew up in the Catholic Church but left.

"They want their children to have something, but they don't want it to be that," says Gingerich. "We provide a safe environment for people to explore faith."—*Anna Groff*

Philadelphia youth take home convention mural

Auction was 'where they most saw God at work' during Pittsburgh 2011.

Everett J. Thomas



Dmitri Kadiev (left) adds to the mural in the Pittsburgh 2011 exhibit hall while Joanna Shenk looks on.

On July 31, Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia received a surprise: Their youth presented them with a 20-by-seven-foot plywood mural covered by the colorful artistic expressions of Pittsburgh 2011 conventiongoers to be hung in the church building.

"Our group was exploring the exhibit hall on the first day of convention and happened upon the mural," says Lani Prunés, a youth at Oxford Circle. "Dmitri [Kadiev] saw our group standing on the edges watching and invited us to come join in on the painting, which we gladly did."

Inspired by the passion surrounding the project, the Oxford Circle youth raised money to purchase the mural at an auction held July 7.

The mural was sponsored by the Communications Reference Council, which consists of the communications directors of Mennonite Church USA agencies. While it was originally intended to represent the convention theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," as eager youth flocked to the mural ready to paint, it began to express the theme in a different way.

Dmitri Kadiev, a self-labeled "traveling artist for God," served as the artistic guide for the mural and invited passersby to add their creative touch to the piece.

"Dmitri had a unique style and demeanor that I'm sure I will never witness again," says Prunés. "He was obviously passionate about the work he was doing, which was infectious. I am sure that without his eagerness for painting, patience for working with our group and beautiful insight into the art and gospel, we would not have fallen in love with the mural the way we did."

Kadiev is a member of Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church, which he first became connected with when he met a Service Adventure volunteer at a homeless shelter. He is committed to spending four months of each year traveling, living spontaneously and connecting with marginalized people.

"Letting the kids express themselves artistically seems to give them a way of creating meaning from a lot of the words and emotions they are experiencing," Kadiev says.

Ken Gingerich, art director for Mennonite Church USA, is part of the Albuquerque congregation and invited Kadiev to lead the mural project. He notes that Kadiev enjoys engaging homeless people in similar creative projects, often for weeks at a time, when opportunities arise.

"Dmitri inconveniences me, slows me down, helps me see people who are often invisible and opens my heart—kind of like Jesus did," says Gingerich.

Lynn Parks, youth pastor at Oxford Circle, says that the youth spent most of their free time between workshops painting on the mural. "They liked seeing the progress being made each day," he says. "They started calling Dmitri 'Uncle Dmitri.' "

Gingerich says that toward the end of the week, youth asked what was going to happen to the mural, and the decision was made to hold an auction.

The Oxford Circle youth pooled their money and came up with $100. A chaperone gave them $50, and others added to the total, including a man they didn't know. The auction became a competition between Oxford Circle and Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs, Colo.; Oxford Circle placed the winning $225 bid, which was donated to Mennonite Mission Network's Service Adventure program.

"A number of people offered money to the youth during the auction because they could tell they were running out," says Parks. "The youth said this auction was where they most saw God at work during the convention."

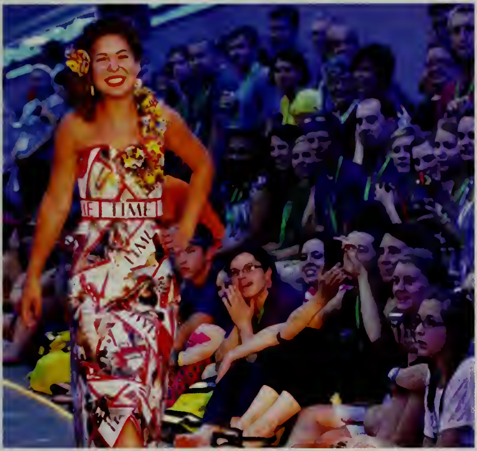
"The purchase of the mural has made me see that we cannot do as much individually as we can do together," says Prunés. "With the help of many people, we were able to get the mural to Lancaster (Pa.), then to Philadelphia, then to our building."

"One youth who had been to convention before didn't remember seeing something so collaborative done in the past," says Parks. "This made her realize that, as a church, we are more plugged in together than we realize. The wall was a bridge for the youth to the rest of the people at convention. They see the potential for different people to come together and create something new."—*Johnny Kauffman of Mennonite Church USA*

Time wa(i)sted at EMU trash fashion show

Sophia Mast's dress made from old magazines won the Facebook vote

Jon Styer



Sophia Mast, of Lancaster, Pa., won the Facebook vote in the trash fashion show at Pittsburgh 2011.

The latest trend in fashion is usually found inside a magazine—not composed of the magazine itself. But for trash fashion designer Sophia Mast, fashion is found in materials we use everyday.

"I have always loved fashion and creating things," says 15-year-old Mast of Lancaster, Pa. "I've noticed dresses made out of magazines before, and I wanted to try making one of my own."

Mast's creation, a dress she named "Wa(i)sted Time," won the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., trash fashion show's Facebook vote at Pittsburgh 2011 on July 7. Contestants were able to design and build their costumes at home, then model their attire down a runway on the rooftop of the convention center.

Mast produced the dress from recycled *Time* magazines she collected.

"The red band on the *Time* magazine cover helped give my dress a recurring theme while also giving order to its randomness," she says.

Mast worked on the dress from the beginning of May until the day she left for Pittsburgh 2011.

Cyndi Gusler, EMU professor of art, praised Mast for "a beautiful job crafting the materials together" and for her poise modeling her creation on the runway.

The connection between youth conventions and trash fashion began with a graduate class Gusler was enrolled in where students created sculptures based on a model dressed in recycled materials.

The idea took shape when EMU students inquired about an independent study course. Gusler mentioned trash fashion, and as the concept spread, so did the interest from students and staff.

"[Former academic dean] Marie Morris asked me to include the course in normal class offerings," says Gusler. "I never imagined it would be such a hit," leading to fashion shows at two successive biannual Mennonite church conventions. At the 2011 convention, close to 1,250 people were in attendance—far exceeding the expected seating capacity of 750.—*Mike Zucconi of Eastern Mennonite University*

Correction: Addie Banks was the first Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference woman to be ordained in New York City but the third Mennonite woman to be ordained in NYC in the last 100 years. Arlene Pipkin was ordained on March 17, 2002, at Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship. Pipkin served as pastor of Manhattan from July 2000 until the end of March 2002, when she succumbed to cancer. Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship is a member of Atlantic Coast Conference.

Recipe for disaster:
1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS
Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

America's outrageous war economy

Paul B. Farrel, in an article in *Market Watch* with the above title, says that America's economy is not a "manufacturing" economy, not an "agricultural" economy, not a "service" economy, not even a "consumer" economy, but a "war" economy. He asks, "Why no outrage?" He writes:

> *Deep inside we love war. We want war. Need it. Relish it. Thrive on war. War is in our genes, deep in our DNA. War excites our economic brain. War drives our entrepreneurial spirit. War thrills the American soul. Oh, just admit it, we have a love affair with war. We love America's Outrageous War Economy. Why else are we willing to surrender 54 percent of our tax dollars to a war machine that consumes 47 percent of the world's total military budget? Why have Washington's 537 elected leaders turned the governance of the American economy over to 42,000 greedy self-interests lobbyists?*

Paul Craig Roberts, in an article posted on Aug. 19, 2009, entitled "Americans: Serfs Ruled by Oligarchs," writes:

> *The out-of-pocket cost of America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is $900,000,000,000. When you add in the already incurred future costs of veterans' benefits, interest on the debt, the foregone use of the resources for productive purposes and such other costs as computed by Nobel economist Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard University budget expert Linda Bilmes, "our" government has wasted $3,000,000,000,000—three thousand billion dollars—on two wars that have no benefit whatsoever for any American whose income does not derive from the military/security complex, about which five-star general President Eisenhower warned us.*

Seymour Melman (1917-2004), a professor of economics at Columbia University (as quoted by Thomas E. Woods Jr.), focused much of his energy on the economics of the military establishment:

> *Industrial productivity, the foundation of every nation's economic growth, is eroded by the relentlessly predatory effects of the military economy. ... Traditional economic competence of every sort is being eroded by the state capitalist directorate that elevates inefficiency into a national purpose, that disables the market system, that destroys the value of the currency and that diminishes the decision power of all institutions other than its own. ... The Department of Defense is the only federal agency not subject to audit.*

Today's estimates of our military budget vary between 48 percent of total federal expenditures (War Resisters' League) to 59 percent (American Friends Service Committee). The U.S. military spends $1.98 million of our tax dollars per minute.

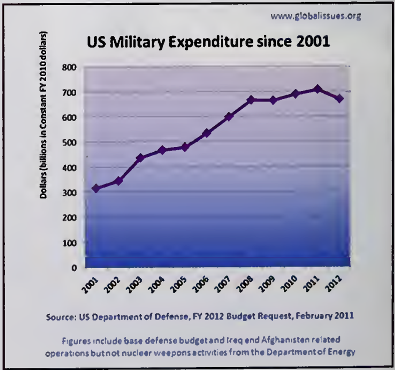
Almost half the world's military expenditures (46.5 percent) is spent by the United States. The Pentagon spends seven times more than China and 13.5 times more than Russia, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook, 2010. Our defense spending has more than doubled since 2001—from over $400 billion per year to almost $900 billion in 2009.

Much of the hundreds of billions of dollars spent each year on defense goes to maintain an empire of military bases around the globe. No one knows for sure how many military bases we have outside our borders across the world—probably not even President Obama. In 2007, Jules Dufour, in a paper entitled "The Worldwide Network of U.S. Military Bases," published by Global Research, listed 737 U.S. military bases in 63 countries with 847,441 different buildings and equipment with an underlying land surface area of 30 million acres. Dufour writes:

> *The Earth's surface is conceived as a wide battlefield that can be patrolled or steadfastly supervised from the bases. The establishment of U.S. military bases should not ... be seen simply in terms of direct military ends. They are always used to promote the economic and political objectives of U.S. capitalism. For example, U.S. corporations and the U.S. government have been eager ... to build a secure corridor for U.S.-controlled oil and natural gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea in Central Asia through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea.*

The Unified Command Plan by the Pentagon has the whole world divided into zones of U.S. military control:

1. the U.S. Northern Command (North America);
2. the U.S. Southern Command (South America);
3. the U.S. Pacific Command (Asia);
4. the U.S. European Command (Europe and Russia);
5. the U.S. Central Command (The Greater Middle East and parts of Africa);
6. the U.S. Africa Command;
7. the U.S. Strategic Space Command.



US Military Expenditure since 2001

Source: US Department of Defense, FY 2012 Budget Request, February 2011

Figures include base defense budget and Iraq and Afghanistan related operations but not nuclear weapons activities from the Department of Energy

In addition, there are the U.S. Joint Forces Command, the U.S. Special Operations Command and the U.S. Transportation Command. And we have a sprawling intelligence complex.

On Feb. 14, a military.com report headlined, "Obama unveils $3.73 trillion 2012 budget." Some administration officials suggested a five-year freeze on many domestic programs.

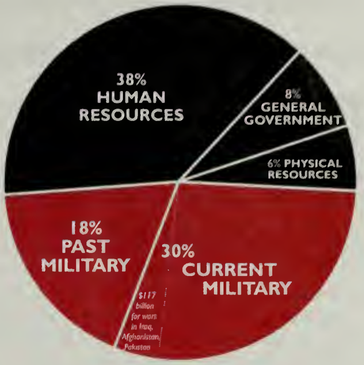
On Feb. 14, the *Washington Times* reported that "Mr. Obama's budget projects that 2011 will see the biggest one-year debt jump in history … to reach $15.476 trillion by Sept. 30. That would be 102.6 percent of GDP—the first time since World War II that that dubious figure has been reached."

Meanwhile, monies for education and social programs are being cut, but not the defense appropriations. Poverty in the United States is increasing rapidly. Our children and grandchildren have had their future looted by the U.S. military industrial complex .

The American Society of Civil Engineers has issued a report card on our nation's infrastructure with an average of D. The ASCE estimates that to bring our infrastructure up to snuff would take $2.2 trillion, an amount we probably have squandered already, once the full cost of our current wars are totaled. Large percentages of the human race are experiencing extreme global poverty. And our perpetual wars just make things a lot worse.

In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said it best:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.—E. Daniel Riehl



Poster contest addresses autism

Hailey Hagen's entry wins the Anabaptist Disabilities Network contest.

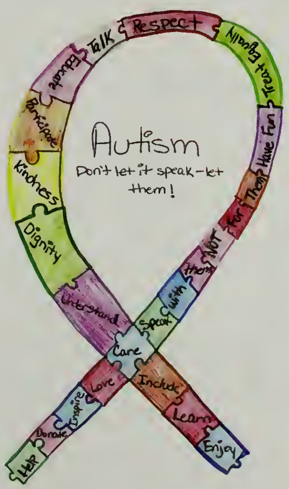
Building relationships with people who have autism was the subject of the top entry in a disabilities poster contest sponsored by Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) in July.

The grand prize poster created by Hailey Hagen features a ribbon made of brightly colored puzzle pieces surrounding the words, "Autism—Don't let it speak, let them."

The puzzle pieces contain words that encourage building relationships with people with autism: dignity, kindness, respect, include, learn, enjoy. Some of these words spell out the message, "Speak with them, not for them." Hagen lives in Telford, Pa., and attends Towamencin Mennonite Church in Kulpsville, Pa.

Posters in the contest addressed themes of disability inclusion, advocacy or etiquette. Artists submitted posters online and at the Pittsburgh 2011 gathering of Mennonite Church USA, July 4-9.

Other winning posters were submitted by Abby Graber and Madeline Gerig of Assembly Mennonite, Goshen, Ind.; Derek Reinhardt and Karen Johnson of Sonnenberg Mennonite, Kidron, Ohio.; Shelby Roth of First Mennonite, Iowa City, Iowa; Hannah Johnson of Eighth Street Mennonite, Goshen, Ind.; Justina Woolford of Philippi (W.Va.) Mennonite, Philippi and Haila Bay of Fort Collins (Colo.) Mennonite. A slideshow of their artwork is online at www.adnetonline.org/posters.—*Anabaptist Disabilities Network*



Hailey Hagen's winning poster

Canadians approve sexuality discernment plan

Mennonite Church Canada delegates affirm need for Holy Spirit's guidance.

The delegates of Mennonite Church Canada affirmed that we need to let the Holy Spirit lead in discerning matters of sexuality. Willard Metzger, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, and Rudy Baergen, chair of the faith and life committee, presented "Being a Faithful Church 3: A Plan to Discern Faithfulness on Matters of Sexuality" on July 5. The document outlines a plan or a framework of how the dialogue regarding sexual matters will lead to discernment.

Delegates met in groups to discuss "Being a Faithful Church 3," bringing responses back to the whole group in the following plenary session. While a few delegates made comments that spoke to the sexuality issue, most addressed the issue of how the dialogue should proceed.

Henry Kliewer, conference minister for Mennonite Church Manitoba, encouraged delegates to let go of the need to control the outcome. "If we can see this overall question as one of relationship with each other ... then, while there is fear, the potential for renewal is huge."

The plenary discussion was congenial. Barry Lesser of Yarrow, B.C., asked that the church not push for a quick decision because that would lead to an attitude of "us and them." He also suggested that following a timetable means trying to exert control rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to lead.

Bock Ki Kim of London, Ont., spoke about the difficulty that multicultural congregations have with this issue. They are usually not comfortable discussing issues of sexuality, and he expressed the hope that the church would address other issues, too.

Andrew Reesor-McDowell, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, assured the delegates that their written group responses would be reviewed and considered. With a majority vote by raised hands the delegates approved the document, "as a framework and plan to guide the ongoing discernment in Mennonite Church Canada on matters of sexuality." The motion also stated that "approval is also a commitment to encourage and support the General Board as it continues to provide the leadership needed to implement this plan, and to encourage our congregations and area churches to participate as fully as possible."—*Barb Draper of* Canadian Mennonite. *Reprinted with permission.*

ANABAPTIST COMMUNICATORS
presents a two-day conference

Anabaptism in
a visual age

Oct. 28-29, 2011, on the Eastern Mennonite
University campus, Harrisonburg, Va.
Details: info@anabaptistcomm.org
www.anabaptistcommunicators.org

Over 100 members in the U.S. and Canada
enhancing connections and providing professional
development for communicators from Mennonite
and other Anabaptist traditions.

Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans

Everence Financial (formerly MMA) has an opportunity in its Goshen, Ind., office, for a person passionate about charitable giving to serve as Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans. This person will be responsible to provide leadership and product management for charitable products including charitable gift annuities and donor-advised funds.

Qualified candidates will preferably have a law degree; experience in a law practice, development work, or with charitable giving products. Management experience is preferred. Travel required (10 to 15 percent).

Everence is an established, highly trusted, financial services organization with a strong national presence. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; email: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Indiana-Michigan Conference discusses sexuality

Difficult discussions task force provides a safe place to share and listen.

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference's missional leadership team created a short-term difficult discussions task force to help members discuss sexuality this year. The task force's role is to "build capacity and provide resources that will help congregations (and conferences as a whole) discuss difficult issues in the most productive, respectful and honest way possible as we all seek to discern God's will" and to "plan, facilitate, analyze and report on conference-level discussions related to human sexuality."

The task force has met four times—twice to develop a plan and twice to lead experimental sessions with conference leadership groups. Individuals showed they were willing to listen and speak on the topic of homosexuality, knowing that different opinions were present and that the topic is a divisive one within the church.

The task force led Indiana-Michigan delegates in a similar process during the annual sessions at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich., in June. Following annual sessions and into the fall, members of the task force will be available to lead in other settings, by invitation, with area councils of leaders who wish to talk with one another about a topic.

It was not the goal in annual sessions to come to agreement on a single position on any issue, but to practice speaking and listening well to each other.

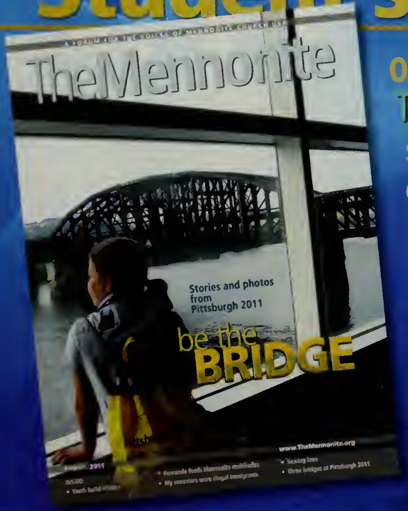
"I think the most helpful thing about the process ... was starting the conversations, naming our fears and our hopes about having such a conversation," says Pamela Yoder of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. "This helped create a safe space for me both to share and to listen."

Yoder also valued the variety of perspectives at her table group. "It felt full of respect and love and a true desire to understand one another rather than to persuade one another."

Members of this task force are David Sutter, chair; Dean Linsenmeyer, pastor at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite; Saulo Padilla, Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s director for the office on immigration; Jane Stoltzfus Buller, pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite in Goshen; André Gingerich Stoner, Mennonite Church USA's director of holistic witness and interchurch relations; and Jim Troyer, pastor at Cedar Grove Mennonite, Manistique, Mich.—*David Sutter. This article was published in the April/May issue of the* Gospel Evangel *with additional reporting by Anna Groff.*

Attention pastors:

Student subscriptions


A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011
be the BRIDGE
www.TheMennonite.org

Order a six-month subscription of TheMennonite for your college and seminary students at a special rate of $24.

Send a list of students to **subscriptions@themennonite.org** before September 16 and your students will receive the October issue of TheMennonite.

Call **800-790-2498** with questions.

Thomas, Soto Albrecht in new roles

Diller leaves Executive Board; Soto Albrecht first Hispanic moderator-elect

The events of the Delegate Assembly at Pittsburgh 2011 included the July 9 transition of Richard Thomas of Lancaster, Pa., from his former position of Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect to moderator, a position previously held by Ed Diller of Cincinnati. Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, also of Lancaster, was affirmed by delegates as moderator-elect and will work alongside Thomas until she becomes moderator at the 2013 convention.

As moderator and moderator-elect, Thomas and Soto Albrecht serve as chair and vice chair, respectively, of the 18-member Executive Board.

Thomas lives in Ronks, Pa., with his wife, Joyce Hostetter Thomas, and attends Ridgeview Mennonite Church in Lancaster. He is superintendent of Lancaster Mennonite School, where he has worked for 39 years.

One of Thomas' goals as moderator is to maintain Diller's priority of vision and purpose. "My hope is that when we gather … in two years, we will have significant progress to celebrate because we kept a clear focus on the Purposeful Plan," he says. "Also, I hope we are willing to experiment, to fail and to learn from both success and failure."

In Soto Albrecht's role as moderator-elect, she will also chair the Constituency Leaders Council, which consists of area conference and constituent group leaders.

Soto Albrecht attends Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster. She is the coordinator of field education and consultant for cross-cultural seminar trips for Lancaster Theological Seminary, a United Church of Christ school. She also is associate chaplain at Women and Babies Hospital in Lancaster. Soto Albrecht is the first Hispanic person to hold the position of moderator-elect. She grew up in Puerto Rico and returns home twice each year, visiting her family and connecting with her home congregation, Iglesia Menonita El Buen Pastor in Hatillo.

"I recognize I have much to learn as I begin my service," Soto Albrecht says. "At the same time, I have a presence and a voice to offer. I pray I will have the courage to speak up when I need to and be silent at other times in order to listen to the different positions present in the church."

Former moderator Ed Diller elected to leave the Executive Board rather than remain on the board as the past moderator.—*Johnny Kauffman of Mennonite Church USA*

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7-11)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (November12-21)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR STEVE LANDIS (April 25-May 4)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3)
TOUR of LITHUANIA (in partnership with Lithuania Christian College International University) (September 12-19)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (October12-24)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)
MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
THE BRITISH ISLES with DAVID & JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 11-24)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada
Reg. #S0014322
2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

More Time With Family!

Photo: Larry Lefever Photography

"We decided there are better things to do in our retirement years than take care of a property. We love to come and go as we please and to have more time to spend with our family, volunteering and following other interests."

Charlie & Ruth Winters
New hybrid home residents

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Landis Homes

ACCREDITATION CONTINUING CARE COMMISSION

For a tour call Donna Shank at **717-581-3935**

1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz • **www.landishomes.org**

Deaconess dreamt of feeding others

Congolese leaders' dream is helped to fruition by new Mennonite doctor.

Rod Hollinger-Janzen

Three members of the Dipumba Plaine Mennonite Church pastoral team, from left: Daniel Kasongo, who was freed from prison; Richard Muteba, who helps administrate the congregation's prison ministry; and Benjamin Mubenga, senior pastor.

In the tropical heat of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Adolphine Kabatusuila Tshilumba nourished a dream. As head deaconess at Dipumba Plaine Mennonite Church in Mbuji Mayi, Tshilumba organized assistance for families in crisis. Although there were plenty of needs within the congregation, Tshilumba longed to minister to people beyond the church's circle of care by taking meals to prisoners and hospital patients, who depend on family members for daily nourishment. (Most Congolese institutions do not have central kitchens or cafeterias.)

Benjamin Mubenga, senior pastor at Dipumba Plaine, affirmed Tshilumba's dream when she shared it with him. "It was a good idea," Mubenga says. "Upon reflection, I realized that it was a biblical idea."

However, as Mubenga and Tshilumba inventoried the needs and began gathering funds, they saw that the scope of the dream far surpassed the resources of the 200 people in their congregation. For two years, they prayed that a door would open.

On the other side of the world, in Goshen, Ind., winter winds piled snow against Bethany Christian School's gym. Two men in the bleachers shouted encouragement to their sons playing basketball. One was Henry De Leeuw, head surgeon at South Bend (Ind.) Orthopaedics. The other was Rod Hollinger-Janzen, executive coordinator of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, which partners closely with Mennonite Mission Network. At halftime, De Leeuw, who grew up in the Dutch Christian Reformed Church and has become a Mennonite, approached Hollinger-Janzen about accompanying him on his next trip to Africa.

De Leeuw was interested in learning about how Mennonites do mission. As a member of The Gideons International, he also wanted to distribute New Testaments.

In May 2010, De Leeuw and Hollinger-Janzen arrived in Mbuji Mayi with 100 French New Testaments. One of the members of the welcome committee, Salomon Lukusa Muya, a university professor and a Gideon, was able to procure 500 more French New Testaments so that each of the 600 individuals in the Mbuji Mayi Central Prison could have a copy of God's Word. Richard Muteba, a member of Dipumba Plaine's pastoral team, was put in charge of making arrangements with prison officials.

On May 22, 2010, Tshliumba's dream was realized when a parade of Dipumba Plaine Mennonites arrived at the prison after walking for nearly an hour with boxes of New Testaments—the first of many visits to be made by the ministere d'évangelisation en prisons et hôpitaux (ministry of evangelism in prisons and hospitals). De Leeuw and Muteba preached about the path to freedom that is found when a person turns away from sin and gives one's life to Jesus. Then New Testaments were placed in the hands of each prisoner.

Mubenga likened the North Americans' visit to a catalyst, a drop from outside the community that activated Dipumba Plaine's two years of dreaming and preparation for mission.

"We praise God," Mubenga says. "The idea just dragged along until God sent Henry."

Nine other Congolese Mennonite congregations have joined Dipumba Plaine in their ministry to patients and prisoners. Muteba and Tshilumba head up an administrative team of three men and three women to assure smooth functioning.

Though a prayer meeting is held in the prison weekly, and a meal is served each month, Muteba visits Mbuji Mayi Central Prison almost daily to encourage the inmates. In addition to providing nourishment for bodies and spirits, church members also help put together legal documents for many innocent people behind bars awaiting trial.

Most of the freed prisoners come to Dipumba Plaine to thank the congregation for caring about them while they were cut off from society. Four of the former inmates have become active church members. Daniel Kasongo is one of them. A high school English teacher and church-planter, Kasongo was incarcerated on false allegations.

When his case was brought before a judge after a year of imprisonment, those who originally accused him spoke in his favor. Now Kasongo is a member of the Dipumba Plaine pastoral team, working alongside Mubenga and Muteba.
—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network

Anabaptist Missional Project is growing

Next gathering for young leaders scheduled for fall in Philadelphia.

Rev. Leonard Dow, pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, told those meeting July 2-4 for the Anabaptist Missional Project gathering at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center to lead others "down the Anabaptist path."

These words set the tone for the gathering of 50 young Anabaptist and Mennonite leaders from across the country who gathered to reflect on mission, the church and God's call. Dow, along with Mary Thiessen-Nation, a longtime urban mission worker and adjunct professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., served as mentors and provided input to conference attendees.

Dow encouraged the group to work against racism and classism and shared about the process Oxford Circle underwent in order to become a multicultural congregation.

The Anabaptist Missional Project, a network of emerging leaders who "love Jesus, care about the church and seek to be a part of God's mission in the world," grew out of a group of friends who gathered together in Harrisonburg for a time of conversation. The group has continued to gather, each time expanding its invitation to a wider circle of others interested in exploring possibilities for the future of the church. The gathering at Laurelville centered on the theme "Renewing the Story: Anabaptism and Mission for Today."

These themes included a renewed focus on church planting. Responding to Dow's call to share the Anabaptist story more broadly, participants affirmed the importance of planting Anabaptist and Mennonite congregations.

According to Matthew Krabill, Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference administrator and one of the conveners of the conference, "Whether these expressions are called neo-Anabaptist, emergent, immigration or missional, the basic desire to see new members of God's kingdom gathered in new communities of faith was affirmed."

Growing out of these conversations, a working group has been formed to create or connect with events and efforts that relate to church planting. This group will collaborate with Mauricio Chenlo of Mennonite Church USA.

The next gathering, which will take place in Philadelphia this fall, will be hosted in collaboration with Dow and members of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church.—*Hannah Heinzekehr of Mennonite Mission Network*

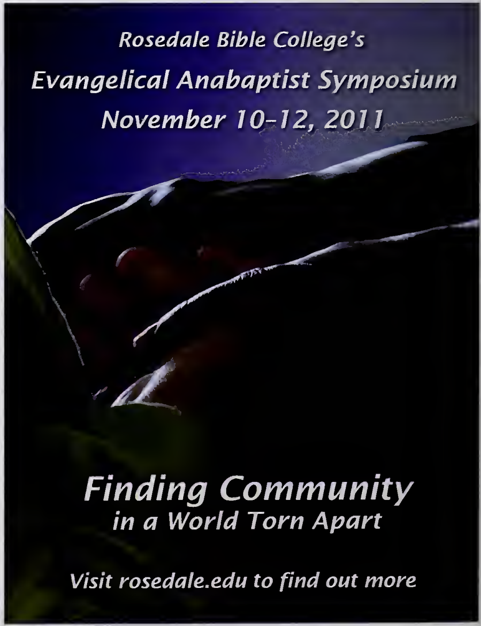
Health insurance for all ages

The right plan. At the right time.

You can choose from a selection of health insurance plans designed for a lifetime of changing needs. How? Talk to us. Call (800) 348-7468 ext. 2460 or visit us online. **www.everence.com**

Everence

2110508



Rosedale Bible College's

Evangelical Anabaptist Symposium

November 10-12, 2011

Finding Community

in a World Torn Apart

Visit rosedale.edu to find out more

CALENDAR

All are invited to an **open house** of the ***Mennonite Church USA offices*** located at 718 N. Main St, Newton, Kan.,on Sept.15, from 4-6 p.m. Meet churchwide staff and Executive Board members of Mennonite Church USA and tour the newly renovated offices.

Business as a Calling—Enduring Values: Lasting Impact. Plan now to join us in Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 3-6, for **MEDA's annual convention**: four days of inspiration, information, networking and fun. Plenary sessions feature Tom Wolf, Joyce Bontrager Lehman, Kim Tan, Ervin Stutzman and the MEDA Year-in-Review. Go to businessasacalling.org for full descriptions of plenary sessions, seminars, tours and online registration, or call 800-665-7026 for more information. Local number: 717-560-6546.

Auction of handmade quilts and handcrafts, food, quilting demonstrations, children's activities. Benefits Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Aid Ministries work around the world. Friday, Sept. 16, 6 p.m. Brunswick stew supper, 7 p.m. small live auction, Saturday auction preview and 7:30 p.m. hymn sing: Saturday, Sept. 17, 8 a.m. breakfast; 9 a.m. auction, noon BBQ chicken, pie and peach cobbler. No admission charge. Georgia Living Building, Georgia National Fairgrounds, Perry, Ga., 404-344-5012 or 404-373-2905

WORKERS

Hoover, Jason L., was licensed as youth pastor for Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa.

Hosler, Glenn D., was installed as bishop for Juniata District, Juniata, Pa., on Aug. 7.

Musser, David W., was installed as bishop for North Penn and Williamsport-Milton (Pa.) Districts, Pa., on July 1.

OBITUARIES

Batterman, Jacob R., Sr., 90, Bridgewater, Va., died July 24. Spouse: Lydia May Batterman (deceased). Parents: David William and Ida Herr Myers Batterman. Children: Daryl B., Jacob R., Jr., Ronnie L.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 28 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Conrad, James Wesley, 73, High Amana, Iowa, and Wayland, Iowa, died June 29. Spouse: Shirley Gingerich Conrad (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Luetta Kaufman Conrad. Children: Mike, Ron, Amy Yoder; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Dunn, Seth, 20, Fresno, Calif., died Aug. 1 from injuries sustained in a skateboarding accident. Parents: Larry and Susan Dunn. Siblings: Eli, Isaac.

Frey, Gertrude "Trudy," 78, Goshen, Ind., died July 25. Parents: Walter and Edna Ost Frey. No services planned.

Gingerich, Alice Ruth Kauffman, 100, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 16. Spouse: Fred F. Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary "Mollie" Shank Kauffman. Children: Joyce Zuercher, David, Elizabeth Yoder, Daniel, Ruth Penner; 16 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 22 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Graber, Amanda Miller, 93, Goshen, Ind., died July 13. Spouse: Allen Graber (deceased). Parents: Noah J.L. and Mattie Miller. Children: Velda Hershberger, Devon, Nelson, Idella Chupp; nine grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: July 16 at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hall, Ruth E. Henrikson, 80, Lombard, Ill., and Lake Thunderbird, Ill., died July 15. Spouse: James Hall. Parents: Paul and Dagmar Henrikson. Children: Jonathan, Timothy, Ruth Hurrell, Judith Slattery, Susanna Steilen, Daniel, Miriam Hall, Jeremiah, Elizabeth McClain; 13 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Hultgren Funeral Home, Wheaton, Ill.

Hassan, Hazel Deter Nice, 85, Goshen, Ind., died July 24. Spouse: W. Richard Hassan (deceased). Parents: Abner and Esther Deter Nice. Funeral: July 30 at The Meetinghouse at Greencroft, Goshen.

Horsch, Albert J., 80, Aberdeen, Idaho, died July 13. Spouse: Shirley Ann Hunsinger Horsch. Parents: Rudolph and Lisel Rullman Horsch. Children: Alberta Zimmerman, Carla Jensen, Gerri Wilson, Debbi Monsen; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Humphrey, Alice Miller, 89, Elkhart, Ind., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Meriadath Humphrey. Children: Fred, Tim, Becca, Karla, Mark; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Chapel Hill Funeral Home, Elkhart.

Kaufman, Gordon Dester, 86, Cambridge, Mass., died July 22 of multiple myeloma. Spouse: Dorothy May Wedel Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Edmund George and Hazel Stella Dester Kaufman. Children: David, Gretchen Kaufman Court, Anne Kaufman Gurung, Edmund; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 30 at Mennonite Congregation of Boston, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Divinity School will hold a memorial service at Harvard University's Memorial Church in the fall.

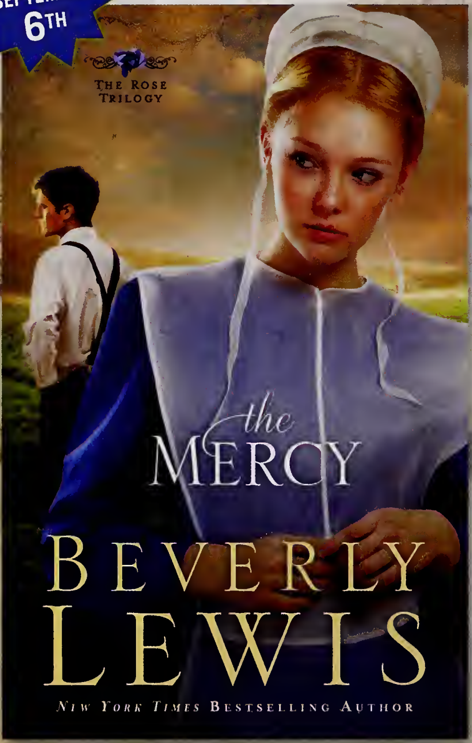
For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

EXPERIENCE THE

Heart and Soul

of an Amish Family

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 6TH


The Rose Trilogy
the Mercy
Beverly Lewis
New York Times Bestselling Author

Don't miss the stunning conclusio to this *New York Times* bestselling series from Beverly Lewis!

With the young men they love bound to the English world, will two Amish sisters be forced to choose between their beloved People and true love?

The Rose Trilogy
the Thorn
Beverly Lewis
the Judgment

The Mercy
by Beverly Lewis
THE ROSE TRILOGY # 3

And Don't Miss Books 1 & 2!

The Thorn by Beverly Lewis
THE ROSE TRILOGY # 1

The Judgment by Beverly Lewis
THE ROSE TRILOGY # 2

BETHANYHOUSE

www.bethanyhouse.com
A Division of Baker Publishing Group

Kaufman, Lida Marie, 54, Plain City, Ohio, died Aug. 5, at Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. Preceded in death by maternal grandparents Abraham J. and Susanna Beachy Kuhns, paternal grandparents Moses H. and Susie Stutzman Kaufman, nephew Bryan Lee Hershberger. Survived by Alvin and Edna Lucille Kuhns Kaufman (parents); Susanna Kaufman, Amy Lilly, J. Mark Kaufman, Heather Wengerd, Drew Benjamin Hershberger, Heidi Marie Hershberger, Erik Payne, Laurel Rae Kaufman, Elias Alvin Kaufman. Memorial service: Aug. 10 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Keim, Wesley J., 68, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died July 24. Spouse: Lizzie Hershberger Keim. Parents: Jonas J. and Malinda Yoder Keim. Children: Betty Miller, Mike, Diane Keim; three grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

King, Arvilla Mae Yoder, 94, Belleville, Pa., died July 17. Spouse: Treenis King (deceased). Parents: Rueben and Mary Zook Yoder. Children: Dennis, Darrel, Delmar; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Kroeker, Dr. Betty, 68, Inman, Kan., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Dr. Dean Kroeker. Parents: Penson Henry and Kathryn Holley. Children: Joshua, Cheyenne, Celea Hoodman, Duane; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 10 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Nafziger, Daniel W., 61, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 8 of PML. Spouse: Shirley Nofziger Nafziger. Parents: Vern and Evelyn Nofziger Nafziger. Children: Jacob, Amy Springer, Lincoln, Rachel Oswald; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Riemenschneider, Emma Ruby, 94, Pigeon, Mich., died July 23. Spouse: Aaron Riemenschneider (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Catherine Schwartzentruber Ruby. Funeral: July 26 at Meyersieck-Bussema Funeral Home, Pigeon.

Richard, Glen Albert, 94, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, died June 20. Spouse: Margaret Mae Wenger Richard. Parents: Peter W. and Emma Graber Richard. Children: Wesley, Duane, Gloria Graber, Lynn; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 23 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mount Pleasant.

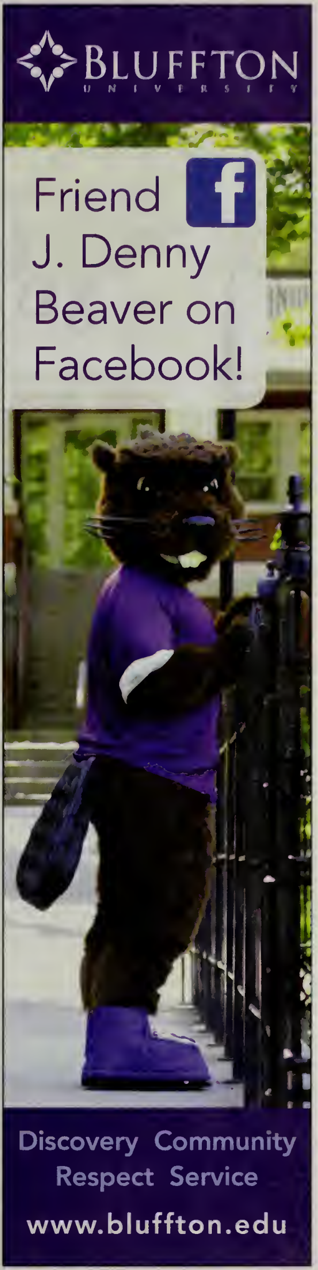
Rittenhouse, Erma Alderfer, 84, Lansdale, Pa., died Aug. 5. Spouse: Royden Ruth Rittenhouse. Parents: Warren and Martha Hendricks Alderfer. Children: Bob, Patti Freed; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Rodamer, Earl McVicker, 95, Springs, Pa., died July 20. Spouse: Carrie Ellen Moser Rodamer (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Margaret Keim Rodamer. Children: Carolyn Ann Gum; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Sand, Dorothy Wiens, 60, McPherson, Kan., died Aug. 3. Spouse: Kit Sand. Parents: Henry R. and Rubena Marie Enns Wiens. Children: Rodger and Buffi Bashore, Darren and Dusti Ivey; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Yoder, Edith King, 93, Goshen, Ind., died July 28. Spouse: C. Richard Yoder. Parents: Frank D. and Laura C. King. Children: Thomas, William, Susan Yoder; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Lela Egli, 87, Springs, Pa., died July 14. Spouse: Edwin E. Yoder. Spouse: Vernon C. Landis (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Ida Kauffman Egli. Children: Arthur Landis, Larry Landis, Don Livingston, Josephine Livingston, Rita Miller, Edna Churchill; seven grandchildren; several great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Springs Mennonite Church.



Available digitally

TM DIGITAL EDITION

The Mennonite is now available in a **digital edition** you can read on your computer screen or tablet.

To sign up, e-mail **editor@themennonite.org** or call **800-790-2498.**

TheMennonite
A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011
be the BRIDGE

RESOURCES

The Creator Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Art of Becoming Human by Steven R. Guthrie (BakerAcademic, 2011, $24.99) helps Christians better understand the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and offers a clear, engaging theology of the arts by exploring various connections between art and spirituality.

Ministry with Prisoners and Families: The Way Forward by W. Wilson Goode Sr., Charles E. Lewis Jr. and Harold Dean Trulear (Judson Press, 2011, $17.99) addresses the critical issues of incarceration and prisoner reentry and their impact, especially on the African-American community.

Redeemed: A Reflective Chronicle of the Lives of Fred E. Augsburger and Carolyn King Augsburger by Ruth Ann Augsburger and Owen E. Burkholder (Xlibris, 2011, $23.99) reflects on the lives of this married couple, including a wartime romance, 30 years of mission work, multiple renewal meetings, interim pastoral work and retirement in Amish country. To order, call 888-795-4274 or go to www.xlibris.com.

Nature as Spiritual Practice by Steven Chase (Eerdmans, 2011, $18) shows in practical ways how delighting in the natural world can enhance Christian life. Chase employs anecdotes, ancient wisdom, modern science, scriptural tie-ins, practical advice and thought-provoking contemplative exercises to reclaim the role of nature in the formation of spiritual and moral identity.

God Is Subversive: Talking Peace in a Time of Empire by Lee Griffith (Eerdmans, 2011, $20) sets forth a solidly biblical argument for uncompromising nonviolence and describes encounters with dumpster divers and prostitutes, bag ladies and judges.

Justice in Love by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Eerdmans, 2011, $35) shows that justice and love are at heart perfectly compatible and argues that the commonly perceived tension between them reveals something faulty in our understanding of each.

Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith, edited by Roger Allen and Shawkat M. Toorawa (Eerdmans, 2010, $20), collects 15 essays by experts to present the major elements of Islam, including its history, beliefs, practices and interactions, notably with Christianity, Judaism and the modern world.

Understand Sexual Abuse by a Church Leader or Caregiver (Mennonite Central Committee, 2011) is an updated free booklet first published in 2003. It starts with a biblical text and provides a definition of what constitutes sexual abuse by a church leader or caregiver. Order from 888-563-4676 or http://bit.ly/lxwByo.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

B	A	I	H	S	H	E	B	A		E	Z	R	I
E		R		H		G		B		L			L
A	B	I	G	A	I	L		S		I	G	A	L
R		B		L		A	M	A	S	A		S	
		E		L		H		L		B	O	A	Z
G	E	S	H	U	R			O					O
O				M	I	S	H	M	A	N	N	A	H
L	I	O	N		C		E				O		E
I			A		H	A	R	P		K	I	L	L
A	R	A	B	S			O	L	D		S		E
I			A					E		I	E	N	I
H	A	L	L	E	L	U	I	A	H				H

Autumn Hope Conference at Merry Lea
Worship, theological reflection and outdoor fieldwork in Merry Lea's beautiful ecosystems.
Just Footprints: Stepping Carefully in Our Creator's World
Friday, October 7, 6 p.m. to Sunday, October 9, noon
$125 includes all meals; $20 per person per night.
email jenniferhs@goshen.edu to register.

Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship in Boise, Idaho, is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** for an urban congregation. The ideal candidate will give leadership for church growth, have an interest in peace and justice and community ministry, and a strong background in Anabaptist teachings. More information is on the website at www.hydeparkmf.com. Chair, Pastoral Search Committee, Beth Landis, bethelandi@aol.com. MLI form completion required.

Franconia Mennonite Church,Telford, Pa., is seeking a ***full-time associate pastor***, with a focus on preaching, teaching and pastoral leadership for Christian education ministries. Interested people should contact the church office at 215-723-3220.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Lake Center Christian School, Hartville, Ohio, is accepting applications for a ***full-time position as director of special services***. Duties include oversight and direction of all areas of special academic services for a PK-12 program enrolling 610 students. Preference will be given to applicants possessing a master's degree in special education or a master's degree in administration with significant experience in special education. For further information, please contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, at 330-877-2049, x511, or mmcmullen@lakecenterchristian.org .

Part-time youth pastor position available at **Rockhill Mennonite Church**, Franconia Conference, Telford, Pa. Contact rockhillmc@juno.com for more info.

Camp Friedenswald is seeking an individual, couple or family to fill a voluntary service position as ***guest host***. Position requires an outgoing and hospitable personality and good communication skills. Must be available two weekends a month plus an additional week during summer months. Housing and some meals provided. Call 269-476-9744 or e-mail info@friedenswald.org for more information.

Reunion Vocal Band's first album, ***Hunger For Beauty***, is now available for download at iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes) and Amazon (www.amazon.com). $0.99 per song or $8.98 for the album

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is accepting applications for the position of ***East Coast executive director***. The director promotes and encourages support of MCC, provides vision and leadership to MCC program in the region, strengthens mutually supportive relationships between MCC and its constituencies within the East Coast region. To request information or to send a resume and letter of interest (accepted until Sept. 26, 2011) contact Susan Wadel at swadel@mcc.org or call 717-552-5785. A job description is available at http://www.mcc.org/serve/positions/employment.

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference seeking ***full-time executive conference minister***. Qualifications: Experience in pastoral and/or denominational leadership, commitment to the church, administrative and leadership gifts/experience, ability to maintain effective, collaborative relationships, bilingual proficiency preferred. Contact nancyk@mennoniteusa.org

Why should Mennonites exist at all?

Peter Epp teaches Mennonite studies in Gretna, Manitoba, a land overflowing with the bounty of farmer sausage.

If we don't explore whether Mennonite identity is worth it, significant portions of our church will never care to remember what it means.

I just finished teaching Mennonite studies to some of the most motivated high school seniors you could meet. At the beginning of our course, I challenged them with what I thought was the most important and difficult question we face: What is a Mennonite, really?

After much discussion, small group deliberation, and a vote, here's what they gave me:

1. Mennonites believe in peace/pacifism/nonviolence.
2. Mennonites are frugal.
3. Mennonites like farmer sausage.

Did I mention that these young intellectuals also have a sense of humor? Luckily they clearly do because I'm going to poke some fun at them for a moment. They voted for farmer sausage as a major Mennonite distinctive in my well-meaning assignment, so I'm going to criticize them for it in an internationally distributed magazine. Seems fair to me. You'll have to trust me that they would laugh and agree.

First, let me point out that I had to convince them that peace, pacifism and nonviolence should be combined as one point. If I hadn't, the entire list would have looked like a thesaurus entry.

Second, while I thoughtfully offered the term "simple living" to temper their second descriptor, they reluctantly chose to "meet me in the middle" by changing the word cheap to frugal. How thoughtful of them.

Third, they chose farmer sausage as their third Mennonite descriptor. Farmer sausage? Need I say more, except to point out that this Manitoba-Mennonite delicacy is completely unknown to a significant portion of this magazine's readership—let alone our other Mennonite brothers and sisters all over the world.

I could point out that this list is a classic example of "cultural" Mennonites losing sight of true Anabaptist theology. I could also point out that when this happens, some of the most dedicated Mennonites are excluded. And I'd be right, but you already know those things. Though we haven't overcome these questions, we've wrestled with them explicitly for years now.

Instead, here's what I've concluded: Part of why we're still wrestling with perceptions like these is that, like me, we're starting our study with the wrong question. We keep asking each other to nail down a Mennonite identity, but when is the last time that we first asked ourselves if Mennonite identity is even worth something in the first place?

Let me redeem my students by telling you that they're the ones who taught me this lesson. After receiving their doomed descriptors, I threw what I think is a great list of Mennonite distinctives at them, one I stole from Terry Schellenberg at Canadian Mennonite University. They are: peacemaking, discipleship, following Christ's teachings, simple living and community. Then I had them evaluate the list in small groups.

As I circulated, I heard one group diligently changing the assignment. They didn't touch the list. Instead, they started asking each other: "Why does it even matter if we have Mennonites?" In doing so, they reminded me of a basic truth about learning: If we don't know why something is worth learning, we're never truly going to learn it. It finally hit me: Maybe we've all been starting with the wrong question.

So allow me to present what my students and I believe to be the new essential question for our classrooms, conventions, sermons and small groups: Why does it matter if we keep Mennonite identity? Or, to put it another way, why should Mennonites exist at all? I'm working on my own answer, but—at the risk of using my teacher voice on you—I think it's most important that we all work on this together.

One word of caution. When I've heard this question come up before, I've heard us quickly say that we're distinct as a peace church and that the world needs that. Then we pat ourselves on the back and move on. I think we can do better than that. Because that's the type of response that prepares our young people to list peace in three different ways, then pad the list with frugality and farmer sausage.

If we don't explore whether Mennonite identity is worth it, significant portions of our church will never care to remember what it means. So we need to ask ourselves: Do we want to be defined by sausage, or do we want something more? Describing ourselves may feel like the meaty part of the process, but we first need some bones for that meat to cling to.

FILM REVIEWS

The Help (PG-13) is faithful to the popular book about black maids in Mississippi in the early 1960s. It's more about the project of a young white woman who wants to be a writer and proposes telling these maids' stories anonymously. The film includes an Oscar-worthy performance by Viola Davis. Though moving, the film does not leave us troubled enough by the racist system that allows whites to applaud the killing of Medgar Evers and insist they are not racists. —*Gordon Houser*

Buck (PG) is a documentary about Buck Brannaman, who served as the inspiration for the novel and movie *The Horse Whisperer.* Having survived a childhood of abuse by his father, Buck has become a cowboy philosopher who travels the country giving clinics for people with horses that have not been saddled. His patient approach toward horses and his direct truthtelling to their owners is a model of humane, if not Christian, behavior. This is a remarkable film about a remarkable man.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEWS

Books by and about Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder keep coming. **To See History Doxologically: History and Holiness in John Howard Yoder's Ecclesiology** by J. Alexander Sider (Eerdmans, 2011, $28) examines John Howard Yoder's eschatology and ecclesiology in conversation with other theologians. Sider shows how Yoder's thought redefines the church's holiness not as something earned or possessed by its own virtue but as the gift of God, which calls the church to offer praise (doxology), though many readers will find this academic treatise too difficult. A good companion is **John Howard Yoder: Spiritual Writings** (Orbis Books, 2011, $20), which includes selections under such categories as Jesus, the church's mandate, a cosmic vision and practical considerations.—*gh*

What's in a name?

After Anders Behring Breivik killed 76 Norwegians on July 22 in Oslo, the media quickly labeled him a right-wing extremist. But Breivik himself claimed in various forums that he is a Christian, most explicitly and in greatest detail in the 1,500-page manifesto he compiled over several months and posted on the Internet.

According to Religion News Service, "Breivik fashions himself a 'cultural Christian' and a modern-day crusader in a resurrected order of the medieval Knights Templar, riding out to do battle against squishy 'multiculturalism' and the onslaught of 'Islamization'—and to suffer the glory of Christian martyrdom in the process."

Many commentators, particularly conservative ones, quickly distanced Breivik's words and actions from true Christianity, even though some of his words reflect their own beliefs or statements they've made.

Others, such as Boston University religion scholar Stephen Prothero, pointed out that Breivik's hate and terrorism is rooted "in Christian thought and Christian history, particularly the history of the medieval Crusades against Muslims."

Throughout church history, Christians have fought over who is a true Christian and who is not. All of us cringe at times when people who call themselves Christian act in ways we find repulsive, whether those actions are deemed liberal or conservative.

Some simply forego using the name. Instead they call themselves "followers of Jesus." But even that can be misleading, since who can claim to follow Jesus faithfully?

Biblical scholar Wes Howard-Brook in his book *"Come Out, My People!": God's Call Out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond* (Orbis Books, 2010) writes: "The Bible does not present a single, unified perspective on what it means to be a 'Jew' or a 'Christian.'"

Since those calling themselves Christian hold such varied, even contradictory beliefs and practices, does the term even have a clear meaning?

Perhaps Christians can sympathize with Muslims, who are often painted in broad strokes as terrorists. While only a tiny minority of people calling themselves Muslim engage in terrorist activities, many treat all Muslims with suspicion.

Perhaps it's no surprise that some Muslims see most Christians as terrorists in their own right, bombing wedding parties in Afghanistan with their drones. We Christians can protest all we want, saying the U.S. military is not Christian, but it often falls on deaf ears, just as Muslim protests about generalizations against them also fall on deaf ears.

People take names seriously because they can affect how people respond to certain groups. A Lutheran congregation in Rockville, Md., changed its name in May 2010 from Crusader Lutheran Church to Living Faith Lutheran Church.

And Campus Crusade for Christ, a 60-year-old evangelical ministry, changed its name in July to "Cru." A spokesperson said the word "campus" and "crusade" were the main problems in their title. I suspect it was mostly the word crusade.

Filling out the complexity and nuance of our identity, whether it's Christian, Muslim or Mennonite, takes time and hard work. It also requires living up to what we want our name to mean. If we don't act like followers of Jesus, we'll have trouble convincing people what following Jesus means.

Perhaps we should focus less on our name and more on the God of mercy Jesus revealed. TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.
Clara Bartel, Hydro, Okla.
Norma Bauman, Middletown, Ohio
Alice Berkey, Molalla, Ore.
Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
J. Lester Brubaker, Lititz, Pa.
Barbara Burkey, Albany, Ore.
Ed & Carol Burkholder, Elkhart, Ind.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Betty G. Denlinger, Lititz, Pa.
Margaret Derstine, Lancaster, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Anette Eisenbeis, Marion, S.D.
Jeannie Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
John Gerlach, Landisville, Pa.
Martha B. Gingerich, Hartville, Ohio
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Faye Grater, Wauseon, Ohio
Rosalie Grove, Elkhart, Ind.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Amy Hershberger, Hesston, Kan.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Henry Hochstetler, Bonita Springs, Fla.
Lonnie & Shirley Hochstetler, Shipshewana, Ind.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Adeline R. Huebert, Henderson, Neb.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
June Kirkton, Chenoa, Ill.
Janice Kratzer, Dalton, Ohio
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt. Eaton, Ohio
Kathy Leichty, Wellman, Iowa
Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Esther Martin, Zullinger, Pa.
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
Dave Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Doris Nelson, Wayland, Iowa
Elaine Newcomer, West Liberty, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Rita Patterson, Valley Center, Kan.
Jennie Peters, Mt. Angel, Ore.
Imogene Plank, La Junta, Colo.
Melda Richer, Wauseon, Ohio
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Junia Schmidt, Hesston, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Verlene Sebes, Hanston, Kan.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Eleanor Shoup, South Bend, Ind.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Barbara Stoltzfus, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Stoltzfus, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Ethan Stuckey, Archbold, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Shirley A. Toole, Goshen, Ind.
Betty Ulrich, Eureka, Ill.
Otis & Vera Unruh, North Newton, Kan.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Mary Helen Wade, Sterling, Ill.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Martha L. Wedel, Elbing, Kan.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marjorie Wideman, Akron, N.Y.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Mike Wilson, Petoskey, Mich.
Deloris Wyse, Goshen, Ind.
Ada J. Yoder, Nappanee, Ind.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Florine Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Mira Yoder, Plainfield, Ill.
Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

New
from Herald Press

teatime in mogadishu
Ahmed Ali Haile

Teatime in Mogadishu
My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam
Ahmed Ali Haile, as told to David W. Shenk

The author returned to the chaos of his native Somalia with a clear mission: to bring warring clans together to find new paths of peace—often over a cup of tea. A grenade thrown by a detractor cost Haile his leg and almost his life, but his stature as a peacemaker remained.

This book is a great resource for congregational study groups who are looking at peacemaking and engagement in a Muslim context.

Ahmed Ali Haile died of cancer the week that this book was released.

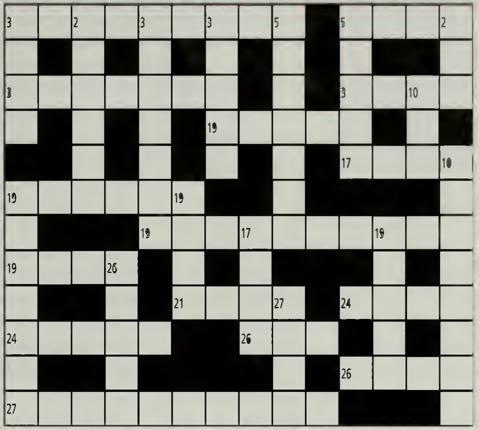
$14.99 USD/$17.25 CAD
www.mpn.net/teatimeinmogadishu

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

King David

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All references are to the New International Version unless stated otherwise.

ACROSS

1. David committed adultery with her, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
6. He was in charge of field workers and farmers in David's court (1 Chr. 27:26).
8. She fed David and his men when her husband refused them; she later married David.
9. A son of Nathan and a mighty man of David (2 Sam. 23:36)
11. David's nephew who was forgiven for following Absalom and appointed commander of David's army (2 Sam. 19:13)
12. David's great-grandfather
14. David's wife Maacah was the daughter of Talmai, king of ___ (2 Sam. 3:3)
16. He was one of the warriors who defected to David at Ziklag (1 Chr. 12:10)
19. An animal David fought as a shepherd boy
21. Instrument David played
23. "Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to ___ David" (1 Sam. 20:33).
24. These people brought flocks of rams and goats to Jehoshaphat, great-great-great-grandson of David (2 Chr. 17:11).
25. "David was thirty years __ when he became king (2 Sam. 5:4).
26. David pitched a ___ in which to place the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6:17).
27. The words, "Praise the Lord," found in David's Psalms, are translated in Hebrew as ____ or Alleluia in Greek.

DOWN

1. One animal David fought when he was a shepherd boy (1 Sam. 17:34)
2. David ruled the United Kingdom of the twelve ___ of Israel.
3. David's chief gatekeeper (1 Chr. 9:17)
4. A wife of David and mother of Ithream (2 Sam. 3:5)
5. David's long-haired son who plotted against his father
6. David's oldest brother (1 Sam. 16)
7. When Saul's men came to kill David, Michal told them "He is ___" (1 Sam. 19:14).
10. This initially godly king was David's great-great-grandson (1 Ki. 15:8-11).
13. Adonijah prepared to succeed his father David at the Stone of ____ near En Rogel (1 Ki. 1:9).
14. Young David killed this Philistine.
15. Nathan rebuked David and compared him to a ___ man who takes the one lamb of a poor man (2 Sam. 12).
17. When David killed Goliath, the "Philistines saw that their "___ was dead," and they ran away (1 Sam. 17:51).
18. After David made Solomon king, Adonijah and Joab wondered "What's the meaning of all the ____ in the city?" (1 Ki. 1:41)
20. Former husband of Abigail who later married David (1 Sam. 27:3)
22. David begins the seventeenth Psalm praying: "Hear, O Lord, my righteous ___ … "

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our November 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

October 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 57

(Continued from page 5)

the enriching global partnerships of which I am a part through membership in a Mennonite Church USA congregation—partnerships developed through years of intentional cultivation by my representatives in many places.

For example, in Mennonite Mission Network's July Prayer Vine, I am reminded of more than 10 such partnerships: with Mennonite churches in Ecuador, Spain, Macau, Colombia, France, Japan, as well as with other Christian churches—Grace Community in South Africa, Trinity Baptist in Ukraine, a Christian congregation in Nepal, congregations in Mongolia and (in association with Argentine Mennonites) indigenous churches in the Chaco of Argentine.

These partnerships in varied contexts provide opportunities for learning about a wide array of missional perspectives and practices. They also enable me to be a partnership participant through prayer, e-mail communication with our representatives and financial support.

As we give up the long-outdated notion of mission as only "over there," I pray we may keep growing in our understanding of God's mission through partnerships "across the street and around the world." If we pay attention, there is much to celebrate.—*Alice Metzler Roth, Elkhart, Ind.*

God is the ultimate pacifist

I appreciated the many thought-provoking articles in the July issue. The article by Nisly, "The Power of the Nonshootout," was especially interesting as it talked about the myth of redemptive violence. A few weeks ago, I was attending an adult Sunday school class studying the July 3 Uniform Series lesson titled "The Agony of Defeat." Lesson writer Perry B. Yoder headed one paragraph with the sentence, "God is not a pacifist." He went on to say, "It is tempting to want God to be the very best human being we can imagine. But God is not a human. God has divine prerogatives."

I suggest to Yoder that God is better than the very best human being we can imagine. We Christians receive our high ideals from the teachings and life of Jesus, not from human idealists. Does God really expect humans to act more loving and forgiving than God? Does not God choose to overcome evil with good? I have to disagree with Yoder. I believe God is the ultimate pacifist. It is a myth that God believes in or practices redemptive violence. —*Dennis Lehman, Marion, S.D.*

School vouchers offer equality

As the grandparent of a current Bethany Christian School student and a graduate, I'd like to address the subject of Bethany's acceptance of vouchers ("Bethany Will Accept Tuition Vouchers," July).

We are glad our grandchildren have received the Anabaptist Christian education they have from Bethany. However, we were always uncomfortable with the ethnic uniformity that existed. The only ethnic minority we saw in significant numbers was Korean. The reason? Korean Anabaptists want an Anabaptist as well as an English education for their children and are willing and able to pay for it—not just tuition but the cost of sending them here and supporting them.

The controversy that surrounds Bethany's acceptance of public money in the form of vouchers is caused by the seeming conflict between two Anabaptist values: separation of church and state, and the equality of all people before God.

I don't have direct access to the thinking that led to this decision, but I believe Bethany saw this as an opportunity to offer their quality of education to ethnic minorities and others who cannot personally afford to attend a private school. If we American Mennonites would take seriously the education of all our Mennonite children, not just the affluent, I don't think Bethany would consider vouchers.

By the way, Mennonites take government money in many other ways, so why do we balk at the small sums Bethany will get in vouchers? What about Medicare and subsidies to Mennonite retirement communities, such as the one where I live?—*Elvina N. Martens, Goshen, Ind.*

Sad Spaulding's voice silenced

Thank you for the article in the August issue about the Pink Mennos' worship service at Pittsburgh 2011 ("Pink Mennos Focus on Healing and Hope"). I attended this worship service. God was there in a powerful way, and our worship was very meaningful.

Randall Spaulding, who preached at the service, is an excellent example of Christlike behavior (i.e., turning the other cheek). He has a gentle spirit and overflows with kindness and compassion. I thank God for the way Randy has generously shared his gifts with the church.

Several evenings after that, I was blessed to sit beside him at the convention hymn sing. A group of youth was in front of us, and a young lady turned around and, full of awe and appreciation, told him, "You have a beautiful voice."

Yes, he does. I am so sad that his conference and Mennonite Church USA leaders are trying to silence that voice.—*Joyce Hostetler, Goshen, Ind.*

Haley Behnfeldt was the designer

I appreciate that a fun picture of my daughter, Rachel, was featured in the August issue. However, while the caption stated that she was the winner, it did not mention that the designer and creator of the dress was Haley Behnfeldt. She is a very creative and enthusiastic young woman who deserves recognition for this design.

While Rachel was glad to be Haley's model, she really would like to see Haley get the recognition for her passion and creativity.—*Barbara Bowman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Investing in hope: Encouraged by the Scriptures

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures we might have hope.—Romans 15:4 (TNNIV)

The August issue of *The Mennonite* was filled with stories about the convention in Pittsburgh. From my point of view, the convention was a beautiful time of celebration, conversation, worship, deliberation and discussion. Indeed, it was a time of deep consolation for me: I felt the presence of God's Spirit in and among us as a people.

There were times of tension as well. On a couple of occasions, I had conversation with groups of people who were unhappy with other people or groups at the convention. And there were a number of people who complained about some aspect of the conference. The convention is like a large family gathering, which provides the occasion for "sibling rivalry."

The longer I serve as a leader in the church, the more parallels I see between our church and the churches portrayed in the Scriptures. I note, for example, that the majority of the letters to the churches make reference to some kind of conflict. Some churches nurtured a party spirit. Some were immature. Groups within the church interpreted the Scriptures differently. I get the impression that conflict was quite normal in the early church.

Like the church in Rome, Corinth and elsewhere, we Mennonites also have differing convictions about the way we practice our faith. We quarrel over various issues, including "disputable matters." We even dispute with each other over what belongs in the category of a "disputable matter." And like the church at Rome, we are tempted to treat our brothers or sisters with contempt when they make different choices from ours (Romans 14:10).

Paul tells the church: "stop passing judgment on one another, instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister" (Romans 14:13).

In the midst of the controversy in Rome, the apostle Paul wrote: "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak. We should all please our neighbors for their good, to build them up." This is the context for the hope Paul expresses in Romans 15:4, cited above.

In the midst of the disputes at Rome, Paul found hope in the Scriptures (which for him were the Old Testament). And not only in the Scriptures but also in the example of Jesus. He found many instances where God's people were willing to bear with each other in order to "do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (Romans 14:19).

Paul spoke to the Romans about those who were weak and those who were strong. He urged the strong to accept the weak. Personally, I find it difficult to discern who are the weak and who are the strong among us in the church today. So I ask you as a reader, are you weak or are you strong? And if you are strong, how are you "bearing with" the weak?

There is no question that we face deep differences in the church, whether in our congregations, area conferences, denomination or with neighboring Christians in other church communions. If we focus primarily on our differences, we may lose hope. Paul must certainly have felt that way at times, yet he found encouragement in the Scriptures.

While Paul found hope in the Old Testament Scriptures, I now find hope in the New. With the spirit of Jesus in our midst, and the example of the churches who have gone before us, I find hope for our day. I will invest in that hope by doing all I can to love Jesus, love my brothers and sisters and study the Scriptures in company with others. In these we can all find hope.

If we focus primarily on our differences, we may lose hope.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

**************************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 941 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P51
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 695
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

Fresh questions about social media

Anna Groff

I get tired of conversations about social media that revolve around the same set of questions: Should I friend my boss on Facebook? Is my life interesting enough for Twitter? How do I get more traffic to my blog? And, in our case, is it possible for print publications to increase subscriptions through social media?

First, no one—not even social media experts—has all the answers. Second, in many situations these are actually the wrong kinds of questions, as I discovered through the Associated Church Press (ACP).

At the April ACP convention in Chicago, I was introduced to a group of people asking new questions about social media that I find refreshing and relevant. This group of theologians and communicators are part of the New Media Project at Union Theological Seminary.

The Project examines the bigger picture of social media, offering questions that move beyond building flashy church websites or creating engaging Facebook pages. Instead the project aims to “help religious leaders become theologically savvy about technology.”

Are we too honest online or not honest enough?

During the ACP convention, I attended a seminar led by Verity Jones of the New Media Project. According to the Project’s website, “Compelling theological interpretations of [social media] have not yet been adequately developed. Nor do sufficient strategic frameworks exist to help faith communities move forward using technology in theologically responsible ways.”

Let’s put this in simpler terms.

During the ACP seminar, Jones outlined three areas of theological topics regarding social media: ecclesial authority, community and bodily presence.

The first topic, ecclesial authority, asks how the “flattening” of information creation relates to the “priesthood of believers.” I ask, What does it mean for our church community that anyone and everyone can blog about church happenings, theology and more?

The second topic, community, addresses the “high value placed on individual personalities,” or the ego often prevalent in online profiles. I ask, How do we use Facebook and Twitter in genuine ways? Are we too honest online or not honest enough?

The third topic, bodily presence, addresses online congregations and worship. For example, I heard several individuals after Pittsburgh 2011 wonder if it’s possible to virtually participate in worship happening at a churchwide convention.

During the ACP seminar led by Jones, a colleague asked, “Can we wash feet with Twitter? What about Communion?” In the days of webinars and virtual meetings, these questions aren’t as far out as they may seem.

These new realities also produce excitement. Facebook facilitates global connections, a priority of Mennonite Church USA, in ways I could not have dreamed possible. As Mennonite Shirley Showalter says, Facebook is a “worldwide community that can talk about anything anytime.”

In fact, I find the online elements of my work invigorating—especially editing *TMail,* where I can include breaking news or opinion pieces about timely topics that we don’t have space for in the monthly print publication. Then readers can interact with each other online and on Facebook about the articles.

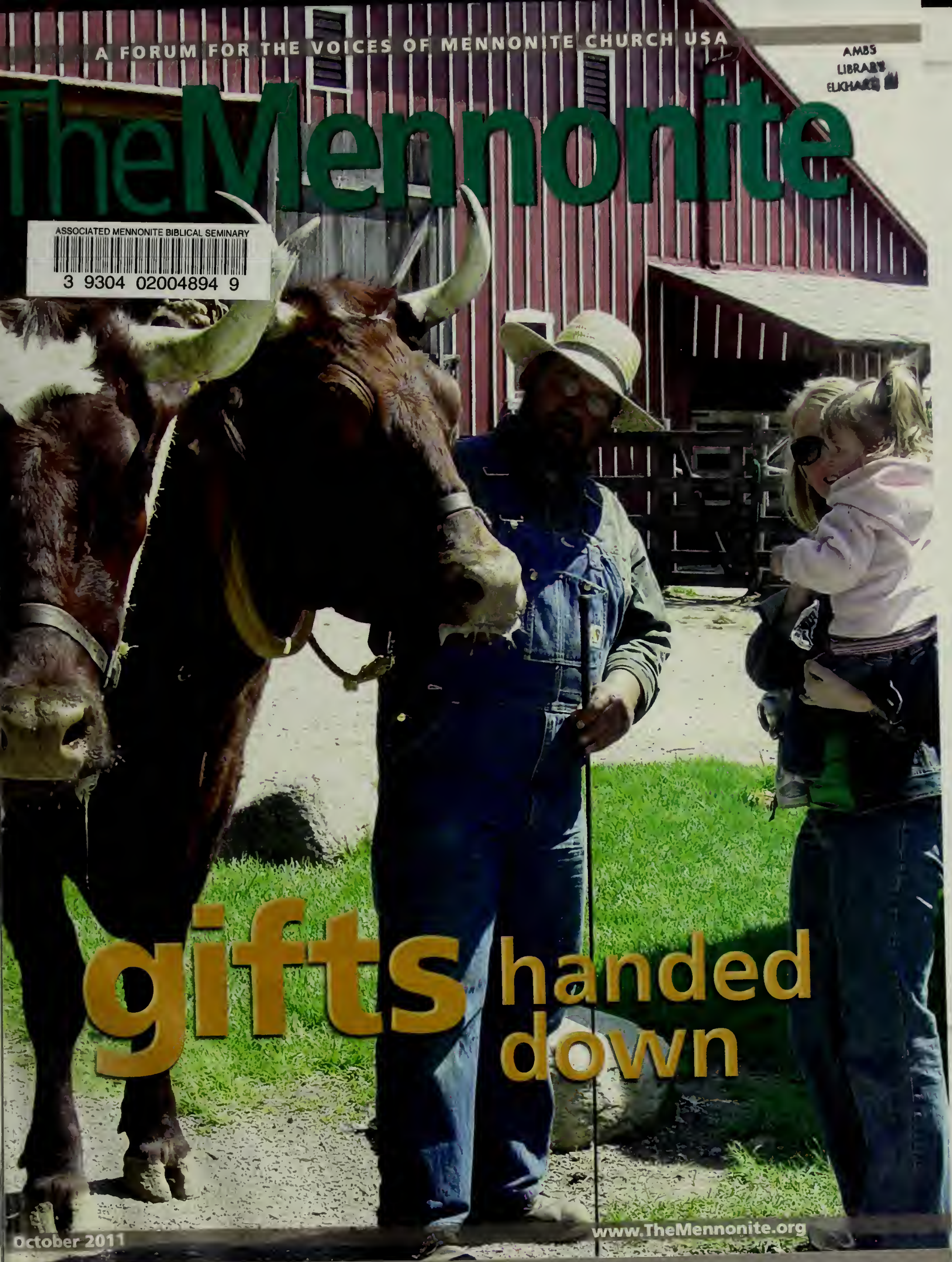
Throughout our work with social media and digital experiments, I hope that we at *The Mennonite* find ways to reflect on the questions raised by the New Media Project as well as address our own questions. I also invite readers across Mennonite Church USA to consider these questions, share feedback with us and submit articles on this topic for publication.—*ag*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

TheMennonite

AMBS LIBRARY ELKHART IN

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02004894 9



gifts handed down

October 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- Mennonite play
- What I learned from my students
- Congregations as ministry greenhouses
- Beauty and faith in Paul Simon's music
- A resolution on church statements

Everence

Photo: John Tirotta

Financial services rooted in faith and values to help you grow and thrive

- Banking services
- Investments and retirement plans
- Charitable giving, trusts and estate planning
- Employee benefits
- Health, life, disability and long-term care insurance
- Credit and debt counseling

We can help. Call (800) 348-7468 ext. 3202, or visit Everence.com.

Everence is a ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches

Everence offers credit union services that are federally insured by NCUA. We also offer securities and other products that are not federally insured and are subject to loss of principal. Not all products are available in all states.

2111230

TheMennonite October 2011 | Volume 14, Number 10

CONTENTS

12 Gifts handed down
—J. Daniel Hess

16 True evangelical faith and the gospel of peace
—Gerald J. Mast

20 Mennonite play
—Gordon Houser

23 As you go … are you preaching or walking?
—Don Clymer

26 What I learned from my students
—Shelley A. Berg

28 The purpose of illness
—Brian D. Stucky

31 Redeeming failure
—Tammy Darling

37 Executive Board discusses purposeful plan
—Gordon Houser

38 García to succeed Miller at Mennonite World Conference—Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

41 Olympian fuels interest in peace clubs—Gladys Terichow

42 Breaking the incarceration cycle—Laurie Oswald Robinson

46 150 years after U.S. Civil War—Steven Nolt

49 Peace and reconciliation in war-torn Ivory Coast—Wil LaVeist

50 What will Mennonites sing?—Steve Shenk

9

20

41

ON THE COVER: Resident farmer Arlan Beck works with oxen Briggs & Stratton at Sauder Village in Ohio. Photo provided by Sauder Village

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
October 2011 | Volume 14, Number 10

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: Everett J. Thomas
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Gordon Houser
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Anna Groff
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller
Design: Dee Birkey

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Volunteers must also pay?

I've heard that voluntary service now requires participants to fund a portion of the cost, including airfare, to their particular location. In the past, there were hundreds of dedicated, willing workers ready to give a year, or many years, to helping those less fortunate without receiving any payment. I am apprehensive that many capable, devoted people—especially younger ones without many assets—will no longer choose to do Mennonite Voluntary Service if they must partially fund their service time.

If I have been misinformed, please clarify how funding works now for entering Christian service. If more people were aware of workers having to pay to volunteer, maybe more donations would appear in the Sunday offering plates, and then there might be adequate money in the budgets for workers to again volunteer without having to also pay their way.*—Dolores Stucky Jantzen, Plymouth, Neb.*

Mission Network responds

Mennonite Mission Network service programs, such as DOOR, Youth Venture and SOOP, ask for specific funds from participants so they can share in the cost of the service assignment. Mennonite Voluntary Service and Service Adventure are funded primarily by the local congregation and organizations where participants serve and the Mission Network general budget. We ask sending congregations to form advocacy teams that connect regularly with participants during their service terms. This connection, which includes prayer, regular communication and an invitation to help fund the service experience, is a vital element of the formation we hope is fostered in participants.

Mission Network seeks to connect individuals and congregations to what God is doing in the world. Individuals or congregations who want to help fund young adults in service can designate funds directly to our service programs. There are many opportunities in all our service programs, and we invite anyone who wants to explore how they might serve to contact us. Explore service opportunities or make a donation at our website, www.MennoniteMission.net
—Del Hershberger, director of Christian Service, Mennonite Mission Network

Pittsburgh 2011 convention

Where were the children and what were they doing at Pittsburgh 2011? If you really wanted an answer to that question, you would be hard pressed to find it in the August issue. It seems the only thing the children did was four days of fund-raising.

It's too bad those responsible for reporting the happenings at our national church convention failed to report that our children, from infants to fifth graders, spent the week involved in more things than canvassing the convention center for money.

Our children, the future of our church, numbered 178 in kindergarten through fifth grade, 62 preschoolers and 53 infants and toddlers. There was worship, singing, drama, projects, activities and field trips during the four days.

My wife and I have been involved with the children's convention for the last three conventions and continue to wonder when the children are going to get the recognition they deserve. It certainly should be more than a half-page picture and five small paragraphs.*—Donald Bacher, Albany, Ore.*

Everett Thomas's editorial (August) caused me to turn to the articles that preceded it. The testimonies of Madeline and David Maldenado, pastors of Arca de Salvacion, reminded me of what I learned from my small role in that church's beginning.

The infant church needed to borrow money, and the lending agency asked the conference to co-sign the loan. As a conference executive I felt that Arca de Salvacion was too small to borrow so much money and that the conference should not risk its own limited resources.

So I was set to argue against the venture. But Ed Taylor, who represented the denomination, said to me, "Don't you dare tell those people what they can't do." Arca de Salvacion received the loan, met its obligations, and the rest is history. Taylor's warning that I should not use my power to limit the power of others has stayed with me.

The "conversation rooms" at Pittsburg appear to have been an appropriate use of power. The Executive Board created the rooms, made the rules and empowered the facilitators to moderate conversations so that bridges of understanding could be safely built. A bridge is a valuable asset that needs to be inspected and maintained. Unfortunately, some bridges have been abandoned inadvertently or destroyed on purpose by Mennonites because of a lack of real conversation.—*Martin Lehman, Goshen, Ind.*

We were delegates at Pittsburgh 2011. We are thankful we were there. We came to the conclusion for Mennonite Church USA to be relevant in today's world, Mennonite Church USA will need to take a firm stand, just like Ervin Stutzman is, on biblical truths. Sin is sin, regardless if it is sexual, lying or trying to change what the Bible says. It was exciting to hear of people being saved, being discipled and in turn witnessing to others. It was an inspiration to us to hear how God is working among the Hispanic churches. We were thrilled, as were many other delegates, that Mennonite Church USA now has a strong leader who supports the membership guidelines and the documents established by the Mennonite church in the past. The Bible clearly states there is a real heaven and a real hell. The only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ alone. We have a loving Lord and Savior, but also a just Lord and Savior. We are merely sinners saved by grace.—*Charlie and Waneta Habegger, Berne, Ind.*

I attended the Pittsburgh 2011 convention and was impressed with the speakers, seminars and the focus on relationship building and reconciliation. I observed, however, that people with a gay sexual orientation were not accepted in the official convention program. A gay Mennonite support group rented a church nearby to offer convention registrants, gay supporters and gay registrants to attend who wished to learn and understand how the church is doing with inclusion of gay people.

I applaud the Mennonite Church USA leadership for a conversation room at the convention center. The room was made available one evening for people willing to listen to anyone of various opinions that focused on sexual orientation. In both the conversation room and the gay worship service, I heard communication that mirrored the process of reconciliation.

In future church conventions, another step of reconciliation would be to have at least one seminar on sexual orientation led by a gay person(s) in the official program, not at a separate venue.—*Keith Gerber, Sarasota, Fla.*

Three bridges from Pittsburgh

What is the purpose of Mennonite Church USA? It's a legitimate question after reading Everett J. Thomas' "Three Bridges from Pittsburg 2011." Thomas identifies three bridges that we are called to walk across: (1) a bridge built by the Lutheran World Federation in 2010 by apologizing for persecuting Anabaptists, (2) the "conversation room" at convention and (3) Ervin Stutzman's clear support of the status quo (i.e. the "membership

(Letters continue on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

The U.S. Civil War began 150 years ago. To examine the experiences of Mennonites during that horrific period, we commissioned Goshen (Ind.) College professor Steve Nolt to write the News Analysis that begins on page 46.

Although we did not plan to make stewardship a theme for this issue, it emerged from the thoughts of several writers. The cover story, which focuses on one family's history, demonstrates the importance of parents teaching their children about stewardship (page 12). In the New Voices column (page 58), Sharon Kniss describes the stewardship choices of a young adult who elects not to work so she can be available to the disenfranchised in Harrisonburg, Va. Anna Groff reports on a different kind of stewardship: something called "Groupees" (page 44). And in Opinion (page 36), Will Braun asks stewardship questions about Mennonite Central Committee's restructuring process. Braun asks: "How has Mennonite Central Committee's $850,000 Wineskins process ... narrowed to a process that is only intelligible to senior insiders?"

We are also asking some stewardship questions about what is printed in *The Mennonite*. On page 60 we publish a response from one reader who sends in his crossword puzzle each month. Because so few people participate with the puzzle, we may discontinue that feature.—*Editor*

Emmanuel Mennonite supports farmworkers

LAKELAND, Fla.—On Sept. 6, after more than 200 miles on bicycles, farmworkers from Immokalee, Fla., arrived at the headquarters of Publix Supermarkets, Florida's largest corporation.

For over two years, Publix has ignored the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' requests to discuss improving tomato-picker wages and work conditions.

Dozens of churches supported the riders with meals, housing, prayer and fellowship. About 75 faith-based allies joined the delegation for a prayer service at Publix's Lakeland headquarters.

At the service, Eve MacMaster, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Gainesville, Fla., presented "An Open Letter from Gainesville Clergy to Publix," which she and other members of the congregation had written and gained signatures from 31 Gainesville reverends, rabbis and imams. The letter quotes passages from the Torah, New Testament and Qur'an, which speak of workers deserving just wages, and urges Publix to affirm the interdependence of farmworkers, supermarkets and consumers by doing "what is needed to bring the bounty of justice to all our tables."—*Kimberly Hunter*

The Corinthian Plan flourishing, says Harder

GOSHEN, IND.—The Corinthian Plan was started in 2010 as a health insurance benefit for Mennonite Church USA pastors and congregational employees. It was designed especially to help those who could not get health insurance either because of the cost or because of their health.

Keith Harder, the plan's director, said on Sept. 11 that more than 75 pastors who had no coverage before now have insurance because of the subsidies the plan provides. Funding for the subsidies is provided by participating congregations that put $10 per attendee into the plan's Fair Balance Fund. Harder said the plan also brought in five new church plants in the last year.

"In a modest way," Harder said, "the Corinthian Plan is addressing an injustice and supporting the planting of new congregations."

Harder said participation remains stable, with 70 percent of eligible Mennonite Church USA workers participating in the plan. According to Harder, the plan performed well in the past year, with fewer claims than expected. Consequently, the board that governs the plan decided on Sept. 12 to increase rates, on average, by less than 6 percent for 2012, when medical inflation in the past year was 11 percent. However, each congregation's increase will be pegged to the demographics in that congregation.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Ken Gingerich

Open house at 718 Main

Ervin Stutzman (right), executive director of Mennonite Church USA, greets former executive director Jim Schrag Sept. 15 at an open house of the Mennonite Church USA offices in Newton, Kan. More than 160 visitors came to the event, which marked the first anniversary of the denomination's sale of adjoining property at 722 Main St. to RiverPoint Church, an Evangelical Free congregation. That freed the denomination to let go of unneeded space and reconfigure the building at 718 Main to accommodate a downsized staff of 34 members.—*Gordon Houser*

CPT names Merwyn De Mello new co-director

CHICAGO—Christian Peacemaker Teams has named Merwyn De Mello CPT co-director, along with Carol Rose, starting in January 2012.

De Mello brings a wide range of international and administrative experience to the position. He grew up in Nairobi, Kenya, and Mumbai, India. In Japan, he worked as an immigrant rights advocate and community organizer to change policy for asylum seekers. In Tanzania, he co-coordinated projects in 13 refugee camps on Tanzania-Rwanda-Burundi borders and developed community education programs on advocacy and peacebuilding. At the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance in Mutare, Zimbabwe, he designed and taught courses in transitional justice and trauma healing, peacebuilding, and provided coordination for peacebuilding strategy development in Harare, Zimbabwe. More recently, in Mumbai, he coordinated programs for promoting honesty, transparency and accountability in governance. He works as recruitment manager for Maryknoll Lay Missioners.—*CPT*

Bontrager to continue as chair of MennoMedia

HARRISONBURG, Va.—On July 1, MennoMedia began as a joint ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, replacing the role of the binational Mennonite Publishing Network. Because a U.S. citizen serves as executive director of the new agency, the board intends to invite a Canadian to serve as chair of the board. Because of the complexity involved in the transition, the Joint Executive

Landis Homes

Art reception features Friendship Community artists

An art reception at Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa., last month featured artists who participate in weekly art classes at The heART of Friendship ART Gallery in Ephrata, Pa. The heART of Friendship, an extension of Friendship Community, empowers adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities to pursue the creation of art as a way of developing skills, achieving self expression, finding a meaningful role in society and moving toward economic independence.—*Landis Homes*

Committee of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA has asked Phil Bontrager of Archbold, Ohio, to serve in this role until Dec. 31. Bontrager was the chair of Mennonite Publishing Network.—*MennoMedia*

Customers satisfied with Everence's name change

GOSHEN, Ind.—Everence members reported a high level of satisfaction in the organization's 2011 Customer Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the survey was to help the organization better understand its customers and what is important to them.

"In these uncertain financial times, it is clear our customers want us to help them apply faith values to their finances," says Steve Bowers, vice president of marketing. "The highlights of the survey showed us changing our identity to Everence went very well but that we still need to communicate our new name on a continuing basis." —*Everence*

Vietnamese Mennonites meet in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA—The 10th biennial conference of the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship met Aug. 12-14 in Philadelphia. Tuyen Nguyen, pastor of the Philadelphia congregation and president of the Fellowship this biennium, chaired the meetings. The conference theme was "Extending the Kingdom of God."

Representatives from nine congregations—in Winnipeg, Manitoba; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta; Vancouver and Abbotsford, British Columbia; Allentown and Fairfax, Pa., and Philadelphia—gave reports. The Philadelphia congregation reported outreach ministries in several new locations.

The keynote speaker was Rev. Nhan T. Bui, pastor of the My Tho congregation of the Evangelical Church in Vietnam. Rev. Nhan had come to California to participate in the centennial observance of the beginning of Protestant missionary work in Vietnam.—*Luke S. Martin*

Canadian delegates OK biennial assemblies

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—The Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in 2012 will mark the start of a two-year cycle of national church gatherings, followed by assembly 2014, 2016 and so on.

While the motion to make this change passed with a strong majority at Assembly 2011 July 4-8, some delegates were not enthused about meeting biennially. They did, however, understand the financial impact of annual assemblies and the related demands on staff.

Diminished personal connections and fewer opportunities for area churches to host an assembly were noted concerns.

Joanne Moyer pointed out the environmental impact of meeting annually. "It costs a lot to the environment every year, so it is also a creation care issue," she said.

Less clear to some is the impact on youth assemblies, which already occur biennially.

Delegates heard there are no plans or resources to produce another youth assembly next year, so the next youth assembly will not occur until 2014.

Lisa Carr-Pries, volunteer chair of the Christian formation council, and Dave Bergen executive secretary of Christian formation, asked for further delegate discussion, observing that this decision means one group of teens will likely miss out entirely on a national youth assembly experience during their high school years.

The General Board placed discussions about the possibility of a youth assembly in 2012 on the agenda for fall meetings.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

A world I could not have imagined

Sara Dick is associate pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

If white hair were a sign of wisdom, I'd be well on my way. But age—or white hair—doesn't guarantee wisdom any more than youth precludes it.

Still, we long for each new year to bring us to deeper faith, peace and wisdom. We long to become freer to answer God's call, even as we become more constrained by time and our bodies and the needs of others.

This summer, I turned 40, which is, of course, the natural thing to do after making one's way through one's 30s. I celebrated accomplishments and grieved losses along the way, like everyone else. Yet the anticipation of this new decade pained me.

My own aging—if I can call it that already—has meant acknowledging both what is and what is not or not-yet. The decade marks have brought life into sharper focus for me: What exactly does God want me to do next? How is God calling me to grow in this coming stretch of time?

In *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*, Elizabeth O'Connor writes about Christian self-discovery and service: "Each of our years is to be richer than the one before, so that the end of life finds us living in a vastly expanded *Umwelt*, seeing a world we could not have imagined in youth. Flexibility and openness to life should be the hard-won marks of the old. Instead, the opposite is more often true."

At 40 I can hardly say I've reached "old age." But when I get there I want to be able to testify that "each of my years has been richer than the one before."

Perhaps the opposite is more often true for the fear and anxiety we feel as yet another year passes and questions linger about God's call in our lives. As we age, we might ask with the Psalmist, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?" (Psalm 42:5a).

We might make excuses to avoid seeking wisdom's way forward: "If only I were happier in my marriage." "If only I made more money." Or, "If only I were smarter."

We long for signs that indicate we're on the right path, headed somewhere other than death. We might feel paralyzed by our circumstances or by our fears about the future.

We are like the disciples on the high mountain when Jesus' face "shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white" (Matthew 17:2). We are overcome by fear at God's power to illuminate and bless. As in the story of Jesus' transfiguration, he comes and touches us, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

So at age 29 and again at 39, I listened for Jesus' reassuring voice. I chose birthday mentors to visit with me monthly, leading up to my birthday. In our conversations, I reflected back on the previous years and prepared for the coming ones. I benefited from the flexibility and openness to life already cultivated by these two older women.

I also planned a 30th and then a 40th birthday bash for my friends and family to give thanks with me for my life—for all life—however it unfolds. This past summer, my uncle Al smoked a hog, my mom painted my house, my cousins sent flowers, my friends and relatives traveled from near and far to illuminate and bless me with their presence—and with God's assurance that I need not fear whatever comes next.

All the planning and praying and fretting sometimes seemed like a lot of fuss to make over something that happens to everyone lucky enough to grow older. For me, though, marking a new decade so carefully was my way to try to "see a world I could not have imagined in my youth" and to share that vision with others.

Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister writes, "Old age enlightens—not simply ourselves, as important as that may be, but those around us as well. Our task is to realize that."*

At 40 I can hardly say I've reached "old age." But when I get there I want to be able to testify that "each of my years has been richer than the one before." With God's grace and the wisdom of my elders to show me the way, I trust it will be so.

*from *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*

Saturday nights

by Jean Janzen

We would pile into the '39 Chevy
and drive to our cousin's farm,
father's sermon notes folded into
the Bible and resting on his desk.

We did it for the easy talk,
fragrance of ripening apples, Jake's
laughter and Anna's angel food.
Sometimes a late supper under trees

after the last hay bales were lifted
into the barn, light bulb swinging
from the elm, moths swirling,
all of it floating into the sermon notes,

somehow, so that fragrance and wings
sweetened the words of the prophets
the next morning when my father's voice
stretched over us, his broad hands

lifted at last in benediction,
"bless you and keep you" like a promise,
even for us, the little girls, swinging
our legs impatiently toward afternoon.

Jean Janzen is author of Paper House *and other poetry collections and lives in Fresno, Calif.*

Reading books, meditating and eating walnuts

Spirituality & Health is a bimonthly magazine that is "for people who wish to explore the spiritual journey—the journey to self-knowledge, authenticity and integration," according to its mission statement.

Among other things, it presents summaries of studies that relate to how people might enjoy a healthier spiritual life. Three such studies in the September/October issue caught my attention.

Books and depression: A University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine study concluded that "adolescents who spend more time reading are much less likely to have depressive disorders than their peers, especially those peers who choose to listen to music."

Of the 106 participants in the study, 46 were diagnosed with major depressive disorder. To monitor the students' emotional health, the researchers called them as many as 60 times during five extended weekends over two months and asked them to report which of these six media they were using: television or movies, music, video games, Internet, magazines or newspapers, or books.

"The researchers found that young people who were exposed to the most music were 8.3 times more likely to be depressed than those who listened to music the least. In contrast, the ones who read books the most were only 1/10th as likely to be depressed. The other media exposures were not significantly associated with depression."

While it's not clear from the study whether depressed young people listen to more music to escape or whether listening to large amounts of music leads to depression, or both, reading books was clearly associated with a decreased likelihood of developing depression.

Meditation: Studies have shown that Buddhist monks who spend thousands of hours meditating have different patterns of brain activity than the rest of us and appear to be happier and less prone to anxiety. But now a new study has found that measurable changes in brain activity show up after only seven hours of meditation.

In a study at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, each participant began with an EEG, which measures the brain's electrical activity. They were told, "Relax with your eyes closed and focus on the flow of your breath at the tip of your nose; if a random thought arises, acknowledge the thought and then simply let it go by gently bringing your attention back to the flow of your breath."

Then 11 people were invited to take part in meditation training, while the other 10 were told they would be trained later. The 11 were offered two half-hour sessions a week and were encouraged to practice as much as they could between sessions.

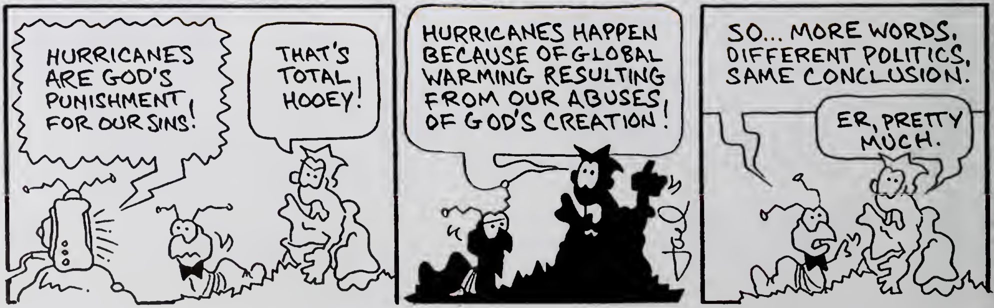
After five weeks, the researchers did an EEG on each person again. On average, each person had done about seven hours of training and practice. But even with that little amount of meditation practice, their brain activity was different from the 10 people who hadn't had training yet.

Walnuts: Scientists around the world liken regular consumption of small amounts of nuts or nut butters to a decreased risk of heart disease, certain kinds of cancer, gallstones, type 2 diabetes and other health problems.

Now scientists have compared both the amount and the quality of protective antioxidants found in different nuts. And the winner is: walnuts. "They have a combination of more healthful antioxidants and higher quality of antioxidants than any other nut."

So read, meditate and eat walnuts for a healthier life.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle — Joel Kauffmann


HURRICANES ARE GOD'S PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS!
THAT'S TOTAL HOOEY!
HURRICANES HAPPEN BECAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING RESULTING FROM OUR ABUSES OF GOD'S CREATION!
SO... MORE WORDS, DIFFERENT POLITICS, SAME CONCLUSION.
ER, PRETTY MUCH.
Joel

> “As a species we’re in a very dangerous place … because of an attitude we’ve got … that we have some right to treat all the rest of life just the way it suits us and throw it away when it doesn’t profit us at all.” —*W.S. Merwin, former U.S. Poet Laureate, in* Yes! Magazine

Too much to spend

Russell Sanders asks you to imagine how you’d spend $1 billion if you kept it under your mattress and didn’t earn any interest. If you lived 50 years, you could spend $1.7 million per month, or $55,000 per day. If you invested that money instead in U.S. Treasury bonds, at current rates you could spend $110,000 every day without touching the principal. That daily amount is a little more than twice the median annual household income in the United States. So why do some billionaires want even more? It isn’t the money, says Sanders, it’s the power they gain through the money.—*Christian Century*

Mississippi churches fight obesity and heart disease

“For over a decade from his pulpit at Oak Hill Baptist in Hernando, Miss., Michael O. Minor has waged war against obesity and bad health,” writes Campbell Robertson in the *New York Times* (Aug. 21). In the Delta this may seem akin to waging war against humidity, but Minor is persistent.

20,000

Estimated number of Americans that convert to Islam annually.

Years into his war, he is beginning to claim victories. The National Baptist Convention, which represents some 7 million people in nearly 10,000 churches, is ramping up a far-reaching health campaign devised by Minor, which aims to have a “health ambassador” in every member church by September 2012.

Robertson writes: “Mississippi is first in rates of heart disease, second in the number of adults with diabetes, second in adult obesity, near last in the percentage of adults who participate in physical activity, near last in fruit and vegetable consumption and dead last in life expectancy.”

The state has fought this by putting healthier meals in schools, working with mayors to create parks and farmers’ markets and paying for public awareness campaigns. The church is part of the solution.

Around 2000, Minor had his ushers and those from other churches go after hesitant pastors with a practical line of argument. “Your sick members can’t tithe,” he says with a laugh.

At Oak Hill now, as in several other churches around the Delta, fried foods are banned. Sweet tea and soft drinks have given way to bottled water. And a track was built around the church for organized walks, which members say are pretty well attended.—*New York Times*

So what?

A young woman preached her first sermon. Her exegesis was sound; the text and title of the sermon matched well; it was carefully organized and delivered in a clear, understandable manner. But the sermon was wrongheaded, especially in context—an African-American congregation. The people called it a lecture because she failed to speak to their life situations and didn’t answer the “so what” question.—*Christian Century*

What the United States spent on broadcasting per capita in 2008: **$3.75**
What the United Kingdom spent on broadcasting per capita in 2009: **$90.70**
Australia spent **$34** in 2008, and Canada spent **$30** that same year.—*Columbia Journalism Review*

Leaving church with no degree

A new study shows that white Americans without college degrees are dropping out of church faster than their higher-educated counterparts. The study, by University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, found that since the 1970s, white Americans with no more than a high school diploma left the pews twice as fast as other Americans.—*Religion News Service*

3 myths about jobs

Myth No. 1: Economic growth produces jobs.

Fact: GDP has grown for seven consecutive quarters since the official end of the recession; no job growth in that same period.

Myth No. 2: There are plenty of traditional jobs if you just look for them.

Fact: In May, there were 4.7 unemployed people for every job opening.

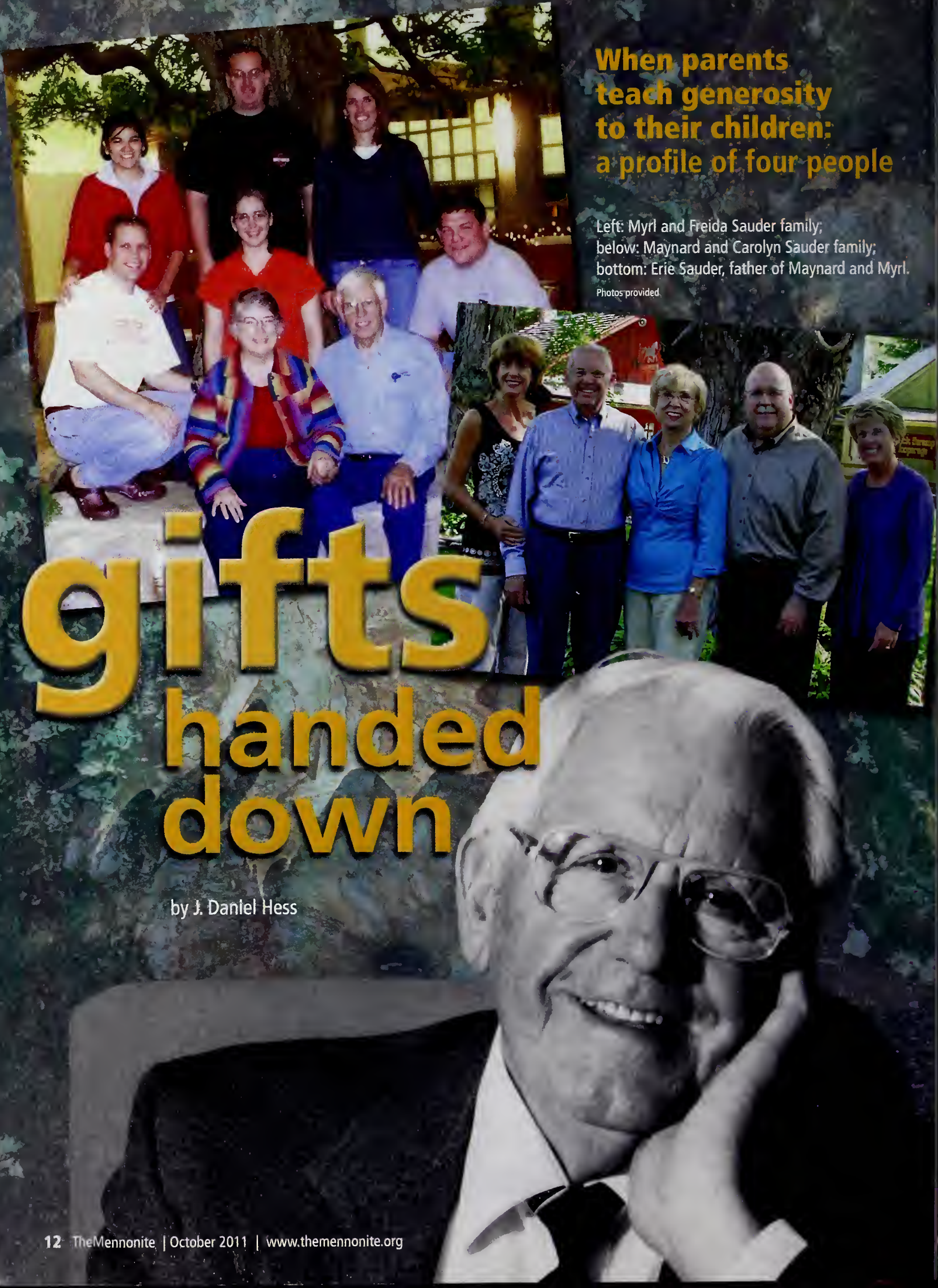
Myth No. 3: If we cut taxes on big corporations and the wealthy, they’ll use the extra cash to create jobs.

Fact: Corporations are sitting on a record pile of cash—more than $80 billion. So are banks, with $1.6 trillion in excess reserves that they’re not lending. That’s been the case for more than a year. But the unemployment rate is unchanged.
—*Yes! Magazine*

gifts handed down

When parents teach generosity to their children: a profile of four people

by J. Daniel Hess



Left: Myrl and Freida Sauder family; below: Maynard and Carolyn Sauder family; bottom: Erie Sauder, father of Maynard and Myrl.

Photos provided

Among many generous people in the farming and business community of Archbold, Ohio, are Maynard and Myrl Sauder and their wives, Carolyn (Yoder) and Freida (Gingerich), respectively. These two couples' largesse has benefited their local community and their congregations (Maynard and Carolyn are members of Zion Mennonite Church, Myrl and Freida are members of Tedrow Mennonite Church, Waueson, Ohio). They have contributed time, talents and treasure to Mennonite Church USA and the world beyond the church, particularly disadvantaged individuals, higher education and "people who need the gospel."

To what might one attribute the Sauders' habit of giving?

The generosity of each of these four people—Maynard, Carolyn, Myrl and Freida—is likely explained in recent studies compiled by Mennonite Church USA. Eighteen individuals, known to be generous, were interviewed in a quest to learn why they were generous. The study led to one important finding: All 18 said they were taught to be generous at a young age by their parents.

You don't chat long with the two Sauder couples before you hear them expressing gratitude for their parents' gifts handed down: Erie and Leona Sauder of Archbold; John L. and Bertha Yoder of West Liberty, Ohio; and Eli and Abbie Gingerich of Kokomo, Ind.

Maynard and Myrl

Myrl, 72, sits across from his brother Maynard, who is 79, and says, "He is my model, my cheerleader, the optimist who balances out my pessimism." Maynard responds, "Myrl is thoughtful, focused, inventive."

In telling their story, they begin with their parents, Erie and Leona Sauder. Erie was an entrepreneur, beginning his own woodworking company in 1934. But more than that, Erie was a dedicated Christian and humane neighbor.

Leona was a homemaker, involved in the church and Erie's partner in business. She took a correspondence course to learn bookkeeping. She became the business' accountant and handled payroll. She wrote much of the company's correspondence. She learned Spanish in order to relate to local residents from Latin America. And she raised three boys.

Erie, a member of the original Mennonite Economic Development Associates, made more than 20 trips to Paraguay to help establish a colony of Mennonites and neighboring indigenous people through his practical expertise in technology, agriculture and industry.

"My father was status blind," says Myrl, citing an occasion of a phone call from his father in Florida in which Erie told of interacting with a plumber who had earlier installed a sprinkler system in the factory. But he declined to mention that on the same day he received a phone call from E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State University, who would later bestow on Erie an honorary doctorate.

Throughout their adult lives, the brothers have consulted each other in matters of financial stewardship.

Maynard tells of his father's handing down responsibilities for the company. Maynard first worked as an accountant and office manager, later as general manager and by 1975 was named president. In 1965, Maynard asked Myrl, who finished an engineering degree from Ohio State University and was working in Indianapolis, to come back to Archbold and join the company. "If you truly think you need an engineer, and if you promise not to put me in charge of a lot of people," replied Myrl, surely in the quiet voice he uses to this day.

For more than 45 years the brothers have worked together "with never an argument between us." Maynard loves management, marketing and sales. He's a motivator and morale booster. Myrl has a technical mind. For example, he bought a microwave oven for Freida, but it didn't fit properly into the kitchen so he made a cart for it. That product was perfected and given to the company, which eventually produced 1,200 of them per day.

Their parents modeled generosity with employees by establishing a Profit Sharing and Trust Plan in 1968 that gave 25 percent of the company's before-tax profits to full-time employees. At that time, full-time employees numbered 96. Today there are nearly 2,000.

Erie handed down the business to his sons. In like manner, Maynard and Myrl have passed leadership responsibilities to their children. Len Geiser, formerly director of Goshen (Ind.) College's Family Business Program, recalls "a favorite session," when Maynard and Fred Meijer (of Meijer Stores) explained the process of moving their family business to the next generation.

Throughout their adult lives, the brothers have

The Junior Historians (a youth volunteer program ages 10-16) make rope at Sauder Village, Ohio's largest living-history destination. Photo provided by Sauder Village

consulted each other in matters of financial stewardship. The brothers and their wives have often decided together where to make contributions.

The brothers have worked together in yet another way, giving care to an older brother who had limited abilities yet worked faithfully in the factory and at Sauder Village. Now retired, he lives in Fairlawn Haven Retirement Community. He, too, understands the value of being generous. The conversation with Myrl and Maynard invariably returns to their parents. "Dad planted trees and expected others to water them," Maynard adds. "He was a wonderful, wonderful person."

Carolyn Sauder

"My father, John L. Yoder, loved the Mennonite church," says Carolyn Sauder. "He never spoke ill of it. So I, too, came to know and appreciate the church, its peace emphasis, its theology and doctrines." Similarly, Carolyn's mother, Bertha (Krabill) Yoder was an ardent supporter of the local congregation. In fact, John and Bertha were instrumental in building the South Union Mennonite Church in West Liberty, Ohio. Her parents and grandparents helped establish a children's orphanage (Adriel School) in West Liberty.

A dairy farmer, John L. Yoder, was a graduate of Ohio State University. He and Bertha valued education, so they supported their children's formal schooling. Carolyn, along with her parents and six siblings, all studied at Goshen College.

> Sauder Village, Ohio's largest living-history destination, reveals many of Carolyn's touches, particularly Founder's Hall, which hosts cultural events such as the Toledo Symphony.

As mother and active church and community participant, Carolyn developed a strong interest in people. She prays for friends in their trials. Carolyn is joyous and spontaneous, a happy traveler, an enthusiastic extrovert. She says she is happiest when with people.

Her interest in people, her heritage and the traditional arts led to a second vocation following her years of child rearing. Her father-in-law, Erie Sauder, was intent on recreating the history of the Great Black Swamp that once occupied much of northwest Ohio. He collected tools and artifacts and moved buildings in his efforts to construct a museum.

Carolyn was invited into what was becoming Erie's energetic retirement to focus on the people aspects of this dream. She was there most every day, developing a management team, nurturing the many employees and volunteers and planning and implementing special events.

Today, Sauder Village, Ohio's largest living-history destination, reveals many of Carolyn's touches, particularly Founder's Hall, which hosts cultural events such as the Toledo Symphony, of which Carolyn is a board member. Nearly 100,000 guests each season experience the daily lives of ancestors while visiting with costumed guides in historic homes, community shops, farms and gardens. An inn, campground, restaurant, bakery and retail shops add to the ambiance that Carolyn helped create. Currently the Village has 500 employees and 600 volunteers.

Carolyn's dedication and generosity applied itself to the Zion congregation and Mennonite Church USA. Shirley Showalter, former president of Goshen College, tells of an occasion when Carolyn and Maynard joined her, some Goshen faculty and other alumni and friends in Colorado Springs. One Sunday morning in a hotel near the Rocky Mountains during the worship service the group sang favorite hymns. Later, as the group focused on the opportunities ahead for the college, Maynard made a speech that galvanized the group, highlighting the college's tradition of music. From out of that meeting came not only the idea for a music center at Goshen but the conception of what it might be. Maynard and Carolyn served as co-chairs of the fund-raising campaign; Shirley credits Carolyn for many of the concepts that make the building an aesthetic marvel.

In much the same way that Myrl and Maynard speak with regard for their parents, so Carolyn happily credits John L. and Bertha Yoder in telling her story. She is, in many ways, an extension of their interests and values.

Freida Sauder

Daughter of Eli and Abbie Gingerich of Kokomo, Ind., Freida was the oldest of 13 children. They were a farm family, "ordinary country folk." They did general farming—milk cows, corn, soy beans, wheat, hay, hogs, sheep—not the best atmosphere for Freida's father, who suffered from asthma. Even Freida remembers the "chokey" chaff at harvest time.

Freida preferred outdoor work to cleaning, so she helped in the fields and garden. As more children were born, however, Freida was needed elsewhere as sister-nanny to younger siblings.

She also remembers her parents helping neighbors in their fields, sharing garden produce and giving meat to the needy at butchering time. She didn't see much cash, except for the nickels or quarters given them for the church offering.

Later, as a teenager, Freida began to hear asides from teenagers about her family's lesser resources. But these comments didn't lower Freida's self-esteem. "We were taught to be nice, no matter what."

Freida completed only two years of high school, then went to work. Later she took the train to La Junta, Colo., and there obtained an LPN degree from the nursing school. She returned to work at the Howard Community Hospital in Kokomo. Then on a blind date she met Myrl Sauder. He, too, was a gentle, humble person, belying his recent degree from Ohio State in engineering. Several years later they married.

Upon arriving in Myrl's community, she imagined that people expected her to conform to the perfect model of executive spouse—which she was not. It took her several years, through childbearing, involvements in church and volunteering, to return to being the person with her feet on the ground.

She and Myrl have three children, to whom she has passed down the wisdom of her parents. A favorite line of hers is, Remember who you are; you are a child of God. The children did not grow up with silver spoons in their mouths. "We tried hard not to flaunt privileges or resources."

Even as Freida and Myrl were raising their family, they lived with the philosophy that God expected them to share talents and time. They served as MYF sponsors for nearly 30 years at Tedrow Mennonite Church.

A connection with youth has influenced Freida's priorities in financial giving. Her own contributions, apart from those with her spouse, go usually to Mennonite organizations, especially those pertaining to children and education. For example, they have befriended a number of local teenagers whose family resources were minimal. They encouraged them, helping them attend Mennonite colleges. Today, one of them, Joanne Gallardo, is associate campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Freida has given many days to the local Care and Share, a partner with Ten Thousand Villages. She served on the board of Fairlawn Haven, a continuing-care retirement community founded in 1961. She designs exquisite quilts that other women in the community then complete for the Fairlawn Benefit Auction. She is in charge of the Tatter Club, a gathering of women who do custom quilting. She has served on the board of Adriel School for many years.

Freida would be much the same Freida whether she was worth $100 or many millions. She is not much different now in attitude from when she lived at home with her parents and large family in Kokomo.

A connection with youth has influenced Freida's priorities in financial giving.

This article features four interesting people from Archbold, Ohio. But the dominant theme pertains to the role of parents in teaching generosity and responsibility. John and Bertha Yoder, Erie and Leona Sauder, and Eli and Abbie Gingerich are just three of the couples of the bygone generation who have endowed us today. We, in turn, have the opportunity to bless the generation to come.

There is a story to be told, one that follows this account, a story about the children of Freida and Myrl and Carolyn and Maynard. Each couple has established a public charitable foundation, with links to Everence, that their children will someday manage. Even now they are invited to help decide on donations.

The Sauder corporation is headed by Kevin, son of Maynard and Carolyn, with brother-in-law Garrett Tinsman and cousin Dan, son of Myrl and Freida, serving in leadership roles.

Kevin's sister Debbie is executive director of Sauder Village. She reflects on her grandpa Erie Sauder's words: "We are blessed to be a blessing." "Generosity is important," she adds, "not just with money but with our time and energy, our talents and ideas—empowering others and serving with a spirit of gratitude."

J. Daniel Hess attends Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis.

Mennonite evangelicals and Mennonite peace activists must rely on the work of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

True evangelical faith and the gospel of peace

by Gerald J. Mast

When U.S. Navy Seals killed Osama bin Laden this past spring, Christian pacifists were reminded that the majority of their neighbors, both Christian and otherwise, do not share their basic assumption that the love of Jesus Christ extends to our enemies. As Americans celebrated the avenging of the Sept. 11 attacks, some Christian ministers bragged that bin Laden was in hell.

Like other pacifist Christians, Mennonites have always struggled during outbreaks of nationalism and militarism to relate their faith understandings to those of fellow Christians who do not share their peace convictions. Should we agree with our neighbors that bin Laden's death was a vindication of the sword of justice that God places in the hands of earthly rulers? Should we invoke the Sermon on the Mount and remind our Christian brothers and sisters that Jesus calls us to love our enemies rather than celebrate their demise? Should we just be quiet and hope people stop talking about the death of Osama bin Laden?

Perhaps the time has come for Mennonites to be evangelical about our pacifist convictions. What we believe about God's love for the whole creation—including even our enemies—is good news to be proclaimed in word and deed rather than a basis for quietly judging our neighbors. Though earthly powers continue to use violence to organize and secure human well-being, God's saving work accomplished by Jesus Christ frees us from the cycles of violence and retribution by which our surrounding world lives. Through the work of Jesus Christ, and through no merit or work of our own, we have been reconciled not only to God but also to our enemies.

Active Mennonite pacifism: For much of Mennonite history, the main way Mennonites expressed their peace convictions was to withdraw into rule-governed separate communities where the way of peace was identified with the mission of the church, not with the policies of state or national government. In the past few decades, some Mennonites have sought to explain and follow pacifist convictions in more pragmatic terms, borrowed from social-movement leaders such as Gandhi and King, and thus to change government policies through peace and social justice activism.

Others are pushing the church to claim or reclaim an evangelical identity that roots peaceful witness in the grace of Jesus Christ. For example, Stephen Dintaman argues that the Mennonite emphasis on the Anabaptist vision has devolved into a behavior-centered focus on social justice activism at the expense of Christ-centered and spiritually empowered faith. In a recent book, Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman traces the shift from withdrawal to activism in Mennonite peace rhetoric and calls for the reattachment of peace to grace.

Such proposals to root Anabaptist pacifism in evangelical theology can appear naïve when it is apparent that most popular forms of American evangelicalism tend to undermine Mennonite peace convictions. Survey data tells us that the Mennonite denominations most visibly identified with American evangelicalism are also those with the lowest number of members supporting the peace position. Moreover, American evangelical Christians are among those believers most visibly identified with the American military establishment, who have voiced the strongest support for American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and who often embrace an aggressive and God-identified nationalism.

Still, as Mennonite Church USA embraces a vision of offering God's love to the world around us rather than withdrawing, the deep evangelical roots of Mennonite peace witness provide a powerful resource for action and persuasion. Rather than accept popular American evangelicalism's neglect of the weaponless peace of Jesus Christ, we can proclaim that the graceful love God offers to his enemies is the same love that flows through us to the world when we have fully received God's grace. Early Anabaptist writers show us how to do this, as do the 20th-century writings of the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth and his Mennonite student John Howard Yoder.

We can proclaim that the graceful love God offers to his enemies is the same love that flows through us to the world when we have fully received God's grace.

Active evangelical faith: True evangelical faith, Menno Simons teaches, "cannot lie dormant." Such faith "manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love." Menno's litany of the works of love is familiar to Mennonites today: True evangelical faith clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, comforts the sorrowful, heals the sick and returns good for evil.

Ted Lewis reminded us a few years ago in the pages of this magazine that Menno's original paragraph on "true evangelical faith" incorporates actions of righteousness and holiness alongside works of love: True evangelical faith destroys forbidden desires; admonishes with the Word of the Lord, seeks that which is lost and saves that which is sound. Lewis noted that Menno framed his paragraph on true evangelical faith with the call to obedience: all those with this kind of faith

▶

walk in the commandments of God, commandments that involve both actions of holiness and actions of service.

Menno's integration of holiness and service joins many other Anabaptist voices from the 16th century that call for a whole gospel witness. Among the earliest was Felix Mantz, executed in Switzerland by drowning in 1527. In his letter from prison, Mantz rejoiced that Christ had been sent both as our Savior and as our "example and light." This statement of thanksgiving acknowledges both Christ who saves us from sin and Christ who shows the way to live. Later in the letter, Mantz claims that "whenever a person brings forth fruits of repentance," they obtain the saving work of Jesus Christ. Christ accomplishes this saving work both by "showing us his love" and through the "power of his Spirit." The same love that Jesus Christ shows us is the love that we are called to extend to others: "Only love to God through Christ shall stand and prevail, not boasting, denouncing, or threatening."

Felix Mantz and Menno Simons make it clear that the faith of Jesus Christ is an active faith visible in the lives of spirit-filled believers.

Felix Mantz and Menno Simons make it clear that the faith of Jesus Christ is an active faith visible in the lives of spirit-filled believers. This faith originates from God, not from us, but when we receive it our lives become obedient and fruitful. Moreover, the defining feature of this true faith is the unending love of God that is manifested in our actions, that flows through us to the world.

Karl Barth highlighted the relationship between the love of God and the command of God that we humans are called to follow. For Barth, the love and grace of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ and revealed in the Scriptures, calls into question all our human efforts to define goodness and right action apart from the Word and will of God. The command of God has come to us in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and "we must seek it only in what happened in Bethlehem, at Capernaum and Tiberius, in Gethsemane and on Golgotha and in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea" (*Church Dogmatics* II.2, s37). Put simply, God both accepts us in Christ Jesus and commands us to accept our neighbor in the same way that God has accepted us.

From this perspective, both the traditional Mennonite temptation to defend pacifism as a nonconformist privilege as well as the modern activist temptation to promote nonviolence as a pragmatic policy run the risk of becoming exhibitions of self-righteousness rather than displays of God's grace. Of course, this is true of every human effort to do the right thing and be a good person. Yet the command of God is not to be good but to receive and offer the goodness of Jesus Christ in our lives.

In 1973, Barth's Mennonite student John Howard Yoder published *The Politics of Jesus*, a book that argues Jesus was a political as well as a spiritual leader and that in his life, teachings, death and resurrection we find a social practice of both nonviolent confrontation and loving service to others that challenges the politics of empire and privilege.

In chapter 11, entitled "Justification by Grace through Faith," Yoder makes an evangelical argument that connects the politics of Jesus with the commanding grace of God. He writes, "It is the Good News that my enemy and I are united, through no merit or work of our own, in a new humanity that forbids henceforth my ever taking his life in my hands." Here Yoder is connecting peace among human beings to peace with God through the doctrine of justification. Just as we are made right with God by the work of Jesus Christ accomplished by God, so are we reconciled with our enemies, apart from our own effort, by the power of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Graceful peace churches: Such an expression of righteousness that embraces even the enemy and that is rooted in the free grace of God is the ground for a new political community—the church—in which former enemies are reconciled, and the new humanity, with a new and holy point of view, is assumed. Assembled by God's grace, the church proclaims in its life and worship the graceful and peaceful command of God for the world. I suggest three features of a graceful peace church witness proclaimed as good news in the 21st century.

First, the church and its members proclaim that through Jesus Christ God has reconciled us, both to God and to our enemies. Therefore, it is not our job to achieve reconciliation with either God or our enemies. This reconciliation has already been achieved by the loving and graceful righteousness of Jesus Christ.

What we do, as members of Jesus Christ, is to gratefully make this already accomplished though not fully realized reconciliation visible in lives of service and holiness. There is no need to defend ourselves from our enemies either by weapons or by withdrawal because the God of Jesus Christ already defends and reconciles us.

Second, this accomplished reconciliation is part of God's larger plan by which all humanity has been created and chosen by God to participate in the work of God's salvation. To use language from Karl Barth, this is the universally offered though not yet universally received election of all human beings. God so loved the world that he gave Jesus Christ, not to condemn but to save the world (John 3:16-17).

In evangelical pastor Rob Bell's recent, controversial book, *Love Wins* (see review on page 59), he makes the case that what God wants—the salvation of the whole world—is what we should expect God to get. God does not impose salvation on human beings against our will; hence, the willful sin of human beings continues to lead to the suffering and agony of hell. Nevertheless, in the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, even hell has been conquered and its inhabitants set free—by the way of the cross.

Therefore, when we recycle and reduce our energy usage, protest war and capital punishment, build housing for the poor, visit the imprisoned, plant new churches and help people overcome destructive addictions, we are proclaiming this good news that God's salvation is for the whole world and that the gates of hell will not, in the final instance, prevail. Our words and deeds will not save the world, and we do not impose them on the world against its will. But deeds such as these are our expression of the hope of eternal and universal salvation that we have in Jesus Christ, who is indeed the only hope of this world.

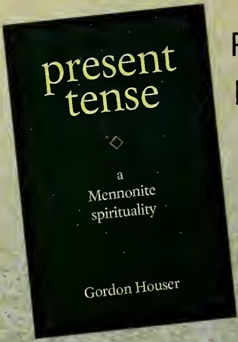
In the peaceful assembly of the church, and in its scattering, this accomplished reconciliation and universal election can actually be tasted and seen.

Finally, in the peaceful assembly of the church, and in its scattering, this accomplished reconciliation and universal election can actually be tasted and seen. As reconciled and chosen by God, previously alienated human beings are assembled together in the body of Christ, where the grace and peace of God through Jesus Christ is proclaimed and offered for the world.

In the letters of the Apostle Paul, which describe this assembly, we find images of the church as a unity that holds together contrasting and conflicting views. There are many gifts but the same Spirit, many works but the same God. Such peaceful unity amid a controversial diversity is a sign of the body's reliance on the work of Jesus Christ rather than our own efforts to keep the bonds of peace and purity.

In conclusion, we will not convince our neighbors to forgive Osama bin Laden or to recycle their plastic or to respect their own bodies by our quiet disapproval of their actions. Indeed, we ourselves will fail to live up to the peace we seek to make, unless we receive and offer the peace of Jesus Christ as a gift of the church by which God is saving the whole world from sin and death.

Gerald J. Mast is professor of communication at Bluffton (Ohio) University and vice chair of The Mennonite, Inc., board. This article is drawn from the 2011 C. Henry Smith Peace Lecture, delivered each spring at Bluffton University and Goshen (Ind.) College.


present
tense
a
Mennonite
spirituality
Gordon Houser

Play? While Mennonites are marked more by work than play (though they do play), they—all of us—need to play. It is how God made us, and spirituality—walking in the way of the Spirit—is primarily being who we are, which, I will argue, is a form of play.

An excerpt from Associate Editor Gordon Houser's book *Present Tense: A Mennonite Spirituality*, which is published by Cascadia Publishing House ($16.95)

In whatever we do, we can surrender ourselves to that task and do it well, to the best of our ability.

Mennonite play

by Gordon Houser

Webster's has many definitions of "play." These include engaging in sport or recreation, having sex, moving aimlessly about, taking advantage, performing music, taking part in a game, gaining approval. While playing can be as strenuous as any work we do, we generally distinguish it from working, which usually involves producing something.

Certainly play can be productive. Athletes, musicians and many others make their living by playing. But I'm using it more in the sense of nonproductive activity, something done for its own sake. I may even call it useless activity, which sounds anathema to many Christians (especially Mennonites), who have a pragmatic bent. But I don't really believe play is useless; it only seems that way to most people.

Mennonites love to accomplish things, which we'd call work. And they even volunteer in droves to do it. But play? That's another story. Mennonites tell Mennonite jokes about their refusal to engage in play or pleasure. For example, Mennonites don't have sex standing up because it might seem like dancing. Or: Always take two Mennonites with you fishing. If you take one, he'll drink all your beer.

Increasingly, Mennonites do play. I know of Mennonites involved in about every recreational activity you can mention—from biking to sailing to motorcycling to fishing to hunting to wine tasting and on and on.

Mennonites also are increasingly involved in the arts—writing, music, painting, sculpture, acting, filmmaking, even dancing. I go to Mennonite writing conferences and find an array of talent and interest. I hear from many Mennonites who are passionate about films.

But let's go back to how Mennonite spirituality includes play. Much of what I've mentioned—recreation and the arts—can be interpreted as Mennonites simply assimilating the broader culture. Where do Mennonites get beyond their penchant for productivity or pragmatism? Where do they lose themselves in an activity that feels spiritual?

One such activity is singing. I've witnessed it; I've experienced it. Being in a group of Mennonites singing a hymn in four-part harmony can be a powerful experience.

Whatever we do—whether it is recreational activities or even what we call work—can be play. And perhaps it should be.

It can also be off-putting. Mennonites take pride in our singing, and sometimes it feels like we're showing off. I've felt uncomfortable on a plane full of Mennonites returning home from a national conference when they break out into the anthem "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." It seems the only way they feel comfortable witnessing to the other passengers. It doesn't feel like loving as much as like boasting. But singing the same song in a conference with several thousand others at the end of a week of worshipping together can be exhilarating.

That act of singing can involve surrender to God and to one another in a communal act of harmony. And while it fills us with joy or peace or whatever, we do it, like all good play, for the glory of God. And like good play, it comes out of who we are. We express with skill and passion thanksgiving for God's gift—in this case of music and one another.

But I don't want to limit play—even so-called spiritual play—to activities considered religious,

▶

such as singing hymns. Whatever we do—whether it is recreational activities or even what we call work—can be play. And perhaps it should be.

In whatever we do, we can surrender ourselves to that task and do it well, to the best of our ability. In doing so, we are living in that moment, offering thanks to God for our ability by using it and likely experiencing a form of joy. It should not need mentioning that this is not an absolute rule. Not all activities are good or even acceptable. I suppose a torturer could surrender himself to his task, do it well and even enjoy it, but it's plainly wrong.

We can find practices that help us play, that help free us from the dominance of our ego.

Let it flow

In his book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes a quality of enjoyable experience that occurs when a person's ability to act is balanced by challenges to that ability. I think of when I played tennis in high school. It was most enjoyable when I played against someone at about the same skill level I had. Playing someone much worse or playing someone much better was less enjoyable.

When we're fully engaged in an activity (of body or mind), Csikszentmihalyi writes, we lose self-consciousness, which "can lead to self-transcendence, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being have been pushed forward." The desire to improve the quality of our experience exists in all cultures. As Csikszentmihalyi points out, "Art, play and ritual probably occupy more time and energy in most cultures than work."

Two obstacles to such flow, Csikszentmihalyi writes, are anomie and alienation. Anomie, or lack of rules, leads to anxiety. Alienation is equivalent to self-centeredness. No rules or too many rules are both harmful to experiencing flow. We in the church could learn from this.

"Flow" is a psychological description that can be read as a self-help aid: Here is how to improve your quality of life. However, if we approach an activity with that in mind, flow won't happen because we're too self-conscious.

This relates to the spiritual practice of living in the present. Play is another way of looking at this, a lens, as it were.

Here we should pay heed to Jesus: Learn from children. When my son Ethan was about 12, he and several of his friends began digging a hole in our backyard. They created connecting rooms in the growing hole as it developed over the years. They worked hard, but it was really creative play. Their hours of labor seemed less like what we may think of as work and more like hours of joy.

Play is without goals other than to engage in play. Children don't say, Hey, it would improve our health if we played tag. Neither do they say, Let's play chess because it may improve my mental powers and help me get into a good college.

How then should we play? We can enter activities we enjoy—whether basketball, sewing, doing crosswords or cooking—with a sense of enjoying that activity for itself. You can also call it having fun. One way you know you're doing it is when you lose track of time.

But we can also practice this approach to whatever we're doing, even work. Let's say I'm doing the dishes. Many people I know have automatic dishwashers, so this activity involves rinsing the dishes and putting them in the machine. OK, but for me it means filling one tub with soapy water and one with rinse water, washing each dish with a rag or brush, then rinsing each one and placing it in the rack to air dry.

This is not an especially challenging activity or one I get a big kick out of. Nevertheless, I can enter the activity with attentiveness, choosing how I organize the work, making sure I get each dish clean. This is a form of play. It can also be a way to be present in the moment God has given me. Brother Lawrence prayed, "Lord of all pots and pans and things … make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates" (*Practicing the Presence of God*).

We can find practices that help us play, that help free us from the dominance of our ego. Such practices will help us live patiently, peaceably and in harmony with others. They will help us attend to and love the world God has made in the moments God gives us.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite. *This article is excerpted from his book* Present Tense: A Mennonite Spirituality, *just out from Cascadia Publishing House.*

Too seldom is there an emphasis on our individual Christian lives as proclamation "as we go" about our daily activities.

As you go...

Author Don Clymer (center front) with his wife and students from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., in Mexico.
Photo provided

are you preaching or walking?

by Don Clymer

The faces of the flight attendants tensed up as we entered the plane. We were on the last leg of a semester-abroad sojourn through Guatemala and Mexico—18 college students and their two leaders. We must have presented an interesting spectacle.

Knowing that at the end of the flight many friends and loved ones were waiting to receive us after a four-month absence, the students were especially keyed up. Added to their enthusiasm, many wore splashy tourist T-shirts, and some tried to fit oversized Mexican sombreros and colorful Guatemalan hammocks into the overhead compartments. We were all sporting golden tans from our days in the tropics. No doubt the attendants were thinking, More loud, obnoxious college students returning from their spring break debauchery in Cancún. Why were we assigned to this flight?

As we were deplaning, one of those previously anxious flight attendants remarked to one of my students: "This was the best-behaved group of college students I have ever served on a plane. Where are you from?"

"Eastern Mennonite University*," the student said.

When we had orientation with the students accompanying us, I did not tell them that they were going to be missionaries.

The Great Commission from Matthew 28:19 tells us: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." The Greek word translated here "go," in the command form, could just as easily be translated, "as you go" (see *As You Go: The Old Mission in a New Day* by John Howard Yoder, Herald Press, 1961). This commission has been used over the centuries to define the missionary task of the church and of each individual. Most often it is viewed as proclamation, the preaching of the Word, or direct one-on-one sharing of the story of salvation. The stereotype of this proclamation is an individual approaching another with the question, "Are you saved?"

© Marcia Widmer - 2011 TM photo contest entrant

Too seldom is there an emphasis on our individual Christian lives as proclamation "as we go" about our daily activities. But individuals are not the only ones to give such proclamation. The church is a "city on the hill." The church is assumed to be a community on the go, a pilgrim people passing through this life making disciples along the way. As it goes about its activities, the community of faith is being carefully observed. So it was with my student group—our temporary community of faith for a semester.

When we had orientation with the students accompanying us, I did not tell them they were going to be missionaries. As they prepared to go, they did not think they were going to be testifying to their faith explicitly as explained above. I did tell them that wherever they went their behavior would reflect the image others had of their country, their families, their church and their school. I emphasized that they should be good ambassadors of all the "cultural spaces" they represent. It's not that we didn't take our Christian commitment seriously. We met weekly for worship. As part of their weekly journal assignments they were to reflect on where they experienced God and what had drawn them away from God. The idea was to confirm that in spite of all the poverty and oppression we were learning about and seeing in person, God is still present and active.

We also reflected regularly on David Smith's book *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity* (Eerdmans, 2009), learning how to respect other people who had strange customs, a strange language and strange foods. Smith does a great job of showing how this respect for the stranger is part of Christian discipleship. But being missionaries? I'm sorry to say, the thought rarely entered my head until we heard the stories that followed us.

For five weeks our group studied at the University of the Americas Puebla (UDLAP), a secular university in Puebla, Mexico. As we went about our activities we were constantly asked, "Who are the Mennonites?" Most Mexicans think of Mennonites as men with straw hats and overalls selling cheese on street corners, referring to the 60,000 Old Colony Mennonites living in their country. We had ample opportunity to express our faith with our colleagues, host families and Mexican friends. We discovered many people who shared our faith and commitment to seeking God's presence in our lives among both Catholics and Evangelicals, in spite of the preponderantly secularized university world in which we studied. However, it was not these individual encounters, as meaningful as they were, that became the earmark of our stay. Instead it was the proclamation of the gospel given by the group, this temporary community of faith, as we went about our business along the way, evidenced in the story of the airline attendant.

We took two courses and did community service while staying at the university. Two Mexican

*Although I use "Eastern Mennonite University" and "Mennonite" frequently in this story to be true to the context, I hope the same can be said of any Christian traveling group or community of faith. Not all our students were Mennonite; their individual Christian commitments varied greatly.—*dc* professors taught our students, one on Mexican history and culture and the other a Spanish conversation course. The history course was a three-hour course, four days a week, completely in Spanish. Because of varied levels of Spanish and interest and the amount of time spent in the classroom, many students became overtly restless and disengaged. I chided them several times, reminding them about being good ambassadors, and asked them to be more respectful of the professor. Maybe because of the Spanish overload, many suffered acute homesickness.

While studying at UDLAP, our students stayed with host families. Many of the homes had kept hundreds of U.S. students before ours. Because of this, and because of the socioeconomic situation of most of the families, with a few exceptions, our students felt like guests rather than part of the family, as they had hoped. This caused some murmuring and restlessness among them, leading to more homesickness. Once again I had to remind them of their responsibility to be good representatives of the "cultural spaces" they came from.

At the end of our stay, the university held a special ceremony for us. The host families, professors and others who had helped facilitate our stay were all invited. After the perfunctory speeches were over and certificates handed out, one after another of the host parents came to me. "Your students were the best we ever hosted," they said. "We never had to worry what time they would come home or if they would come home at all."

After most of the host families had gone, the two professors approached me. "It was a pleasure to teach your students," one said. "They were so respectful and attentive," said the other. I couldn't believe my ears. "Probably the best group of U.S. students we have ever taught," they both chimed in. By now I am reeling. What I thought needed rectification was experienced as superior respect. As we were going about our activities at the university and with our families, we were silently proclaiming the gospel.

The testimony of the group didn't stop with our presence in secular settings. A Mennonite church in Mexico City hosted us for the week leading up to Easter. We lived with them, shared meals with them, attended six worship services with them, including a baptism, worked with them painting their church and had fun with them visiting interesting parts of Mexico City. As our visit neared its end, the pastor, a longtime friend of mine, confided in me that the members of his church were reluctant to host us. Many felt that their homes would not live up to the standards that coddled U.S. teenagers expected. Some had been burned by hosting U.S. teenagers who spent more time dancing in discos than worshiping with them in church. Some had experienced U.S. visitors arrogantly pushing their view of faith onto them.

The relationships we developed during that week profoundly changed people on both sides of the cultural divide. When my group left Mexico, a full three weeks after our visit with this church, a whole entourage of former skeptics, including all the hosting families, came to see us off at the airport, showering us with departure gifts and love. "Thank you for living with us, for eating and praying with us," they said. "For wanting to get to know us and how we practice our faith in Mexico, for encouraging us." There were few dry eyes at this farewell.

The relationships we developed during that week profoundly changed people on both sides of the cultural divide.

As we went about our pilgrimage through Mexico, our temporary community of faith proclaimed the gospel with its actions. Who are the Mennonites? They are those lovely young adults whom we met as they sojourned among us. Who were those young adults who were different from any others we encountered? They are those Mennonite students who respect us and want to learn from us.

"Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." This familiar quote is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. More likely this is what he said: "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." Our temporary community of faith left its mark on those it encountered. In its own special way, it bore witness to the gospel as it walked along. How is your community of faith proclaiming the gospel as it goes? Is it preaching or is it walking?

Don Clymer teaches Spanish and humanities at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., including leading students on semester-long cross-cultural programs to Guatemala and Mexico. He also serves on the pastoral care team at Lindale Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

Lessons for a music teacher

What I learned

by Shelley A. Berg

Bob could not play repeatedly on beats one and three or on two and four for an entire song. Even when counting out loud he lost his place. This was a big problem, since he played percussion and the band needed him to keep the correct beat. No amount of counting, explanation or playing it for him or with him helped. What is missing in his mind and body that he can't do this? I needed to tell his mom and dad that he shouldn't continue with the drums, but I hesitated. Maybe I didn't want to tell them; maybe I didn't know how to tell them. One day I said to Bob: Be a penguin. Flap your arms like a penguin would when he is walking and play the rhythm on the page, and he did. Thinking it might have been a fluke, I made him do another one. He could do that, too. What he couldn't do, play a rhythm while holding drum sticks and using small motor skills, he could do when using his arms and large motor skills, and that gave us a place to begin.

I learned from Bob not to give up on a student who isn't getting it, to keep trying one more thing and to invent new ways to present basic concepts.

Mark's saxophone reed broke right before our band was to play in the concert. He had not brought any spare reeds, and neither had I. He was in tears. Michael, the other saxophone player, had one to spare and gave it to Mark. Hoping Mark had learned to bring extra reeds and to be prepared, I asked him in the rehearsal following the concert what he had learned from this experience.

His answer was not what I expected. He said, "It's good to have friends."

I learned from Mark that community and caring for one another is as important as personal growth.

Cindy is an eighth-grade clarinet player who had to play the second clarinet part all by herself in one of our pieces. In one section of the song the rhythm was difficult, and she struggled to get it right, even after working on it many times and in many ways. I would often see or sense Cindy's tears coming when I worked with her on this and decided that (1) she didn't want to be singled out in front of the other band members; and (2) she didn't want to be corrected for something that for some reason she couldn't seem to fix. Finally, I decided to stop correcting her, even though sometimes she played it incorrectly.

I learned from Cindy that her sense of accomplishment in playing a part all by herself was more important to me than her playing the passage perfectly.

Kim, a fifth grader who plays flute, didn't have a cloth (or handkerchief) for cleaning the moisture out of her flute after playing. When I asked her if she could use one of her dad's, she said that when her dad had moved out of the

I learned from Bob not to give up on a student who isn't getting it, to keep trying one more thing and to invent new ways to present basic concepts.

Graphics: Dee Burkey

from my students

house he took all his clothes and handkerchiefs with him. I gave her one of my extras.

I learned from Kim that there is always more going on in a student's life than is visible to me.

Rachel was a so-so student on the flute. In seventh grade she was still writing in the fingerings, playing the wrong notes and playing in the wrong octave. But then at some point during the year she began to improve. She stopped playing wrong notes and in the wrong octave and even sought out more challenging music. When I asked her about this sudden improvement, she said, "I decided that I wanted to get better, so I started practicing."

I learned from Rachel that no matter how well I teach, there won't be any improvement or success until the student decides that she wants to learn what I am teaching.

Dave is an eighth-grade student who doesn't practice. He is used to getting and doing whatever he wants. When I challenged him to think about whether or not he wanted to continue with private lessons, saying that I didn't think we should waste his parent's money or my time, he became angry with me.

I learned from Dave, as from Rachel, that no matter how well I teach, there won't be any improvement or success until the student decides that he wants to learn what I am teaching.

Steve is the "problem child" of the fifth grade. He calls out and is disrespectful of his classmates and his teachers. Yet during lessons and in band with me he is attentive, on task and able to multitask as he plays percussion.

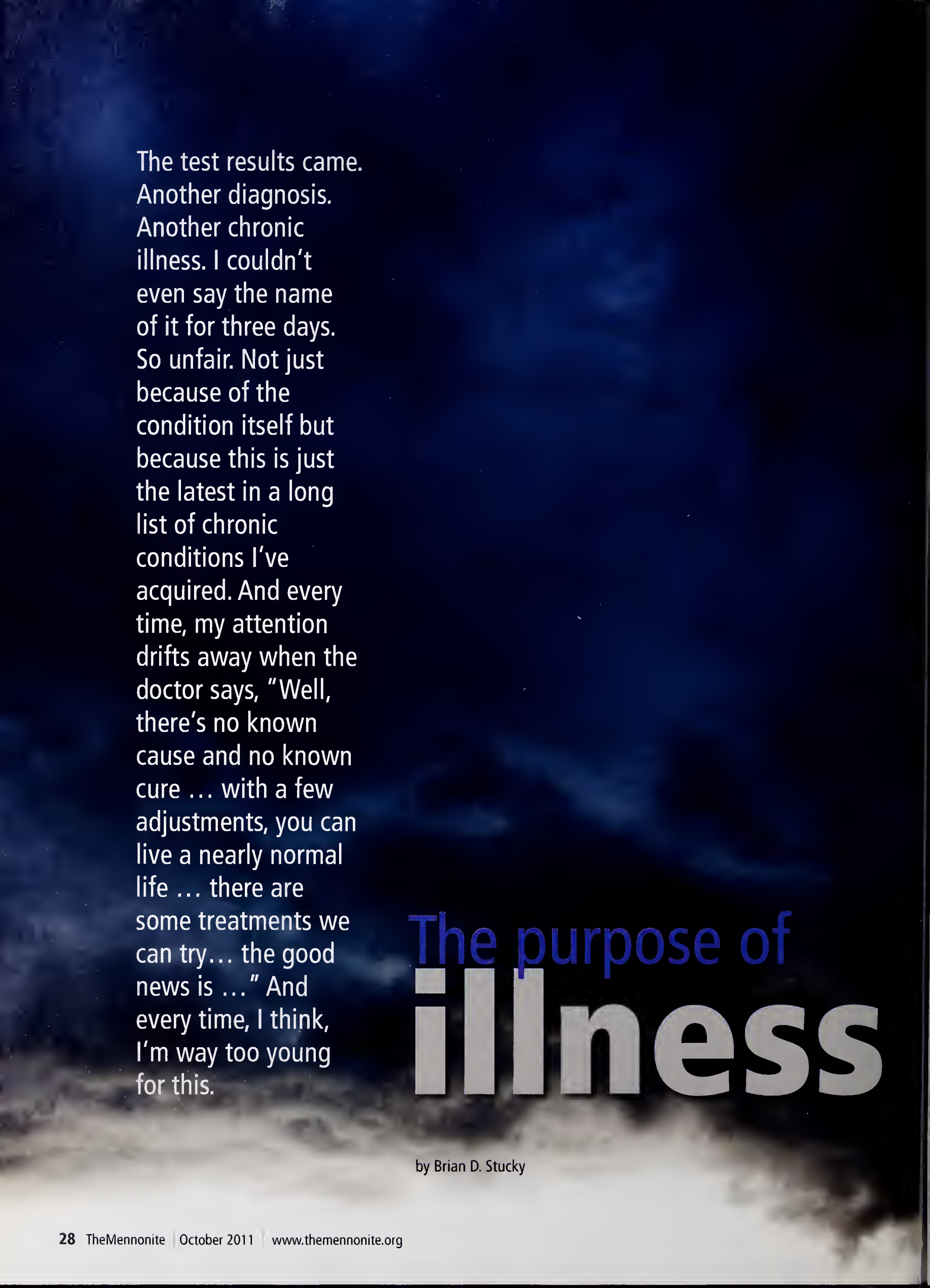
I learned from Steve that I am needed. I also learned that instrumental music education is valuable and essential.

> I learned from Rachel that no matter how well I teach, there won't be any improvement or success until the student decides that she wants to learn what I am teaching.

Larry won't look at me when he talks to me. He is quiet and stiff and odd. What a surprise it was, then, to hear (and see) him perform a solo on the piano! When did he become able to express himself so passionately through his music? He "speaks" through his playing. If he could communicate well through his speech and body language, would he still play the piano with so much expression and meaning? He is like a penguin; awkward when walking on land but at ease "flying" through the water.

I learned from Larry that students can surprise us with who and what they become.

Shelley A. Berg is an instrumental music teacher at Penn View Christian School in Souderton, Pa.



The purpose of illness

by Brian D. Stucky

The test results came. Another diagnosis. Another chronic illness. I couldn't even say the name of it for three days. So unfair. Not just because of the condition itself but because this is just the latest in a long list of chronic conditions I've acquired. And every time, my attention drifts away when the doctor says, "Well, there's no known cause and no known cure … with a few adjustments, you can live a nearly normal life … there are some treatments we can try… the good news is …" And every time, I think, I'm way too young for this.

A personal story and biblical reflection

Then I just plain got angry with God. "What's wrong, God, isn't it enough? You've got to pile some more misery onto me?" I shouted. You mean God wants me to have this? If this is the will of God, I want no part of it.

Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians of a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. How about four or five thorns in the flesh? I have often thought that, too, while praying for humility. But tell me exactly how I have been too arrogant for you, God? Silence. What have I done to deserve this? Silence. All right, God. Whatever you want. I'll do anything.

I ran through the mental checklist of the five stages of grieving: shock, denial, anger, bargaining with God, then finally acceptance. But my mind just drifted elsewhere.

Rewind to a couple of years ago. My psychiatrist uncle passed away. In his last few days, friends and family were able to say goodbye. His worn-out body simply could no longer endure his long list of illnesses, from teenage polio on down. At his funeral, even those who knew him well were blessed by stories of his healing presence to others, in spite of his own suffering. I tried to ponder the meaning of it all. I'm still pondering today.

So after years of health conditions slowing me, I'm wondering how I got here. A lot is genetics. After all, I was once an athlete; I've never abused drugs or alcohol, or lived dangerously (unless you count a couple of college pranks). Maybe this is just what 50 looks like. A sense of mortality looms.

It's hard to repeat, "God's grace is sufficient for me." I'm not sure I even know what that means. Am I just supposed to sit there and take it? It makes no sense to me right now. Harold S. Kushner's book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* answers some questions but not nearly all. The illnesses have not gone away, and I still try to cope. There are good days, but there are days when coping is just so hard. The Sunday school discussion of whether God caused the tornado or allowed it has worn thin. I'm tired of having a thorn in the flesh. I'm tired of the cross to bear. I'm tired of being tested, and I never had Job's wealth to begin with. Don't tell me it's a challenge—a challenge is like climbing a mountain or parallel parking in a tight place, so don't call it a challenge to make me feel better with semantics. Don't tell me this is character building. I've got my fill of character building. It makes no sense that we are supposed to discover our spiritual gifts so that we can better serve the church and God's kingdom, but then he takes away or lessens my ability to serve him. Why? I can accept that maybe God does not cause the bad things that happen to us. Sometimes they just happen.

Faith is only faith when you have to make a leap for it.

Is there a purpose for illness? A purpose God has for tragedies and hard times? Wouldn't it be easier to "curse God and die"? What does healing mean when there is no healing? What does healing look like then? Are there other paths? Are we ever meant not to heal so that we find other truths God is telling us?

Our Sunday school class once discussed when we felt our faith was strongest or weakest. To some, faith could be weakest when prayers aren't answered, frustration mounts or loss of control is felt. Perhaps it's the tragic loss of a child or parent. Where is God then? There's supposed to be a saying that God will not put on us more than we can bear. But that's not even in the Bible. The misinterpreted passage is 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV): "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." Do some receive more than their share of testing? Of course. Suffering has the potential to devastate faith in God. But is it testing that makes our faith weak?

I tend to think it is more often when times are easy that our faith is weakest, that we think we need God least. It is exactly in the hard times that our faith becomes the strongest because it is then we realize we need God. Faith is only faith when you have to make a leap for it.

It's sort of the upside-down thinking that occurred to me one Thanksgiving—that those who are the least thankful are those who have everything. But those most grateful are those who have the least, or have chronic illnesses, or have had a brush with death. They are most thankful just to be alive to count their blessings.

It is only when we recognize our vulnerability that we see the need to tap into the greatness and power of God.

Then the fog begins to clear. We can't know everything, but we hunger to believe God has a reason for things. Perhaps, just perhaps, there is a purpose for illness and hard times. What if the purpose for illness is so that we draw closer to God? I'm not even sure that is sound theology, but I'm thinking about it. Even from the smallest child's sniffles to terminal cancer, are we drawn closer to God during our healthiest, wealthiest times or our weakest, most vulnerable times? And could it be that the ultimate illness, death, is when he draws us so close to him that he calls us home? For the believer, I wonder if this might be true. For those without God, I can't really answer.

In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NIV), Paul has profound words on suffering, weakness and strength: "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

We can identify with Paul about the thorn in the flesh and pleading with God to remove it. With contemplation we read, "My grace is sufficient for you." To this we either slump in the thought that no obvious physical help is on the horizon or search desperately for the definition of grace and try to rally our courage, settling for a deep peace. The challenge of chronic illness is to not lose hope in a situation that will not change. God is always with you, even through this. And, maybe, just maybe, all this will help me better minister to others. Maybe this will help me be a better deacon.

But how do we comprehend "my power is made perfect in weakness" and, "For when I am weak, then I am strong"? This oxymoron illustrates the mystery of God. It is only when we recognize our vulnerability that we see the need to tap into the greatness and power of God. If we see ourselves as successful and invulnerable, we have no need for God. And that is foolishness, faithlessness and ultimately weakness.

If personal spirituality is our goal, we should not pray for the easy life if it lets us drift away from God. Hospitals and health services do wonderful work with healing and should continue the mission to relieve suffering. Physical treatments may relieve stress long enough for us to praise God. There may be other paths for our souls. Our desires should be to draw closer to God, to acknowledge our need of him. It is then that faith emerges. Sometimes this can only be accomplished through hard times and illness. That is when our faith is strongest. And that I can begin to accept.

Brian Stucky is a member of Goessel (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

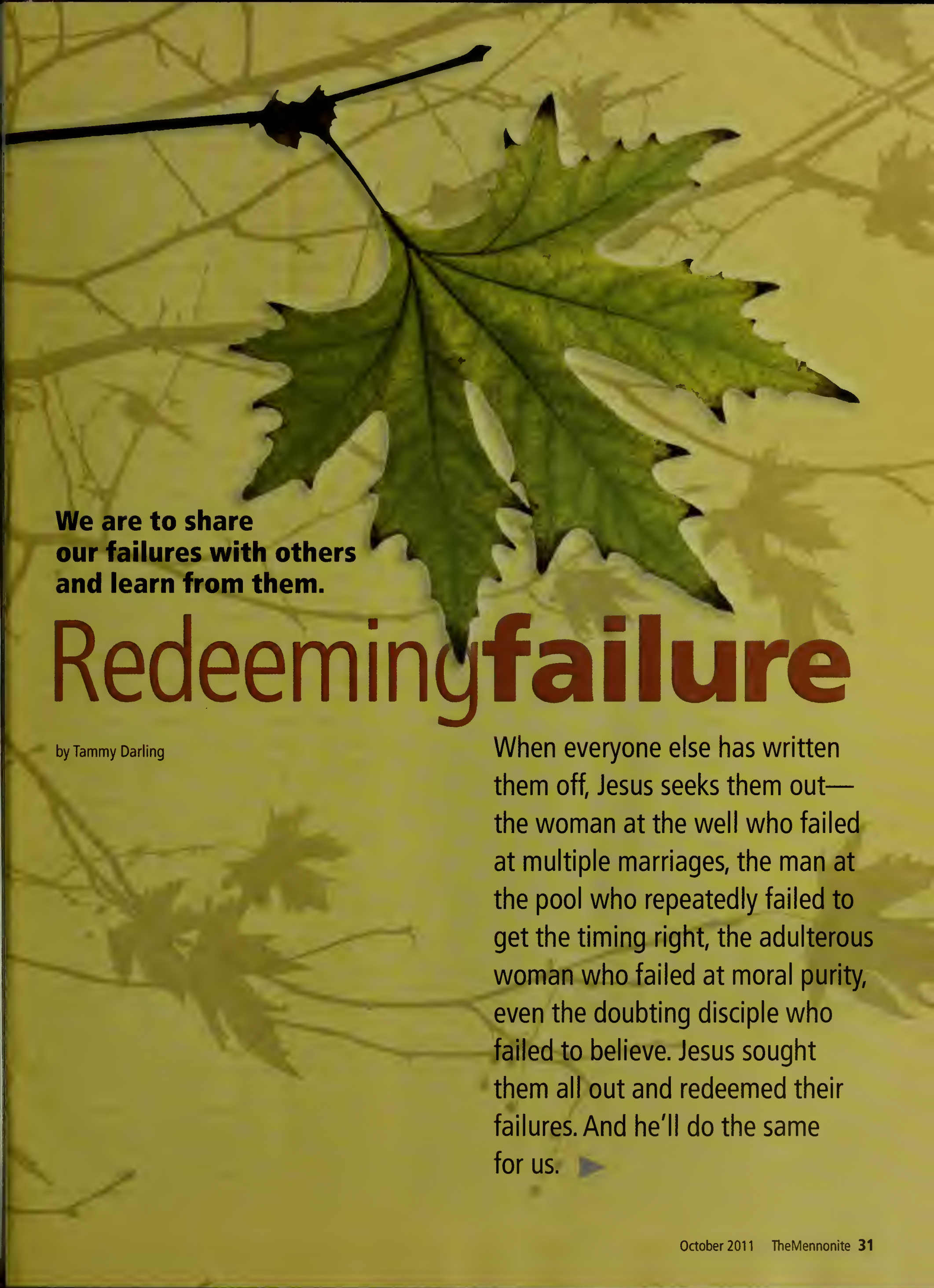
Suggested resources

Thoughts: More than we can bear
http://www.he-is-able.com/page027.html

Scripture "Promises of God: When It's More Than We Can Bear."
http://www.he-is-able.com/page028.html

Ask A Minister
http://www.misslink.org/chapel/askaminister/christian/bear.html

www.sxc.hu.com



We are to share our failures with others and learn from them.

Redeeming failure

by Tammy Darling

When everyone else has written them off, Jesus seeks them out—the woman at the well who failed at multiple marriages, the man at the pool who repeatedly failed to get the timing right, the adulterous woman who failed at moral purity, even the doubting disciple who failed to believe. Jesus sought them all out and redeemed their failures. And he'll do the same for us. ▶

Failure is defined as "falling short of success of achievement in something expected, attempted, desired or approved." And we've all been there.

The moment we are born, we are guaranteed to fail. Born sinful into a sinful world, we "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Failure is common to all humankind.

Failure (real or perceived) is ugly. No one is immune; no one is a stranger to this harsh reality. We have tasted its bitterness; we have felt the pain it leaves behind.

Since failure is inevitable, it matters not how we fail but how we respond to failure.

Scripture deals openly with failure. The defects of those who have gone before us are not left out. King David, for example, committed adultery and had a man killed, yet God referred to him as "a man after my heart" (Acts 13:22).

Since failure is inevitable, it matters not how we fail but how we respond to failure. Failure itself doesn't determine whether or not we bounce back from it. It is what we believe about the failure that makes the difference. For instance, do we believe the failure is permanent or temporary? "I always ..." or "I never ..." statements are an indication that you believe it's permanent. However, a statement such as, "I didn't do well in this particular situation," points to a temporary setback.

Another belief pattern is universal vs. specific. If I scream at my children, a universal belief pattern will respond by saying, "I'm a terrible mother." The failure becomes all encompassing. Or I could respond in a specific manner by concluding that I behaved poorly in that situation and move on.

Our identity: We are unified by our common weaknesses, failures, disappointments and inconsistencies. Yet while we are yet sinners (Romans 5:8), Jesus pursues us with a relentless and everlasting love.

God doesn't label us "success" or "failure." He calls each of us "my beloved." God knows we will fail, when and at what. He could prevent it but doesn't. What matters is that our view of God remain the same whether we succeed or fail.

God's love is not dependent on our success. He can handle our failures, which by the way, do not take him by surprise. Jesus covered it all—even our failures—when he died on the cross and rose again.

Rather than wallowing in the fact that we fail, we can receive the grace of God and remember that he always delights in us. We do not love our own children any less when they fail, and God doesn't love us any less when we fail.

We must realize that our identity does not come from our performance or from the approval of other people. Our identity comes from God. Spending time in his Word and listening to what he says about who we are will enable us to receive from our failures.

Redeeming our failures: When we look at our failure, it's easy to become overwhelmed. We convince ourselves we're useless to God and can't do anything right.

Sometimes when we fail we may, as Adam and Eve did, point the finger. When things go wrong and our dreams die, we have a tendency to lash out at others. Blaming God seems to come naturally, too. But much like Job, when faced with shattered expectations, we have to learn to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 13:15 NIV).

But for our failures to be redeemed, we must allow God to use the experience to make us more like him and prepare us for whatever else he might call us to do. We can learn a great lesson about failure from King David. As he faced his sin with Bathsheba, he didn't wallow in self-pity or blame himself. Instead, he went directly to God and confessed, asking for cleansing and renewal (Psalm 51). No excuses, no hiding, no lies.

Failure is no excuse for spiritual delinquency. Immerse yourself in God's Word. Listen to truth until you get a new perspective.

Get a fresh vision. Get out of your pit, fill it back in, and then go do something to minister or help someone else. Failure will drag you down if you let it.

Expect good things: Centuries ago, John Chrysostom wrote, "The danger is not that we should fall ... but that we should remain on the ground." The prodigal son fell, but he also got back up. We are told that "he came to his senses" (Luke 15:17). Failure and its consequences often provide the wakeup call we need to get back on our feet.

When we fail, we should be eager to return home to Jesus because—thanks to the prodigal son—we know what to expect. We do not expect, "I told you so." Neither do we expect to jump through hoops to prove we're repentant. We can expect a party. The prodigal son may have been the Bible's best example of the ultimate failure, yet his father threw him a party. We can expect the same from our Father.

Some of our failures may seem so embarrassing, shameful or humiliating that we want to bury them, forget they ever happened. But we can't. There are too many fallen people along the way who can profit from what we've been through.

Our failures are redeemed when we share them with others. What we learn and gain in our own failing moments are meant to be shared one day with others who face similar kinds of failures.

God may even use our failure to work out his divine plans. Rahab, the prostitute, turned from her moral failure to God and ended up in the lineage of Jesus.

Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Confederate Army, said, "We failed, but in the good providence of God apparent failure often proves a blessing." If the South had not failed in its mission, our country would not be what it is today.

Failure, therefore is often a matter of perspective. God's definition of success and failure bears little resemblance to the world's definition. God's perspective on success and failure is based on our inner attitudes, not on outward results.

God is looking for people who will trust him. If we live by faith, relying on God's strength instead of our own, we will never be failures in his eyes. We may lose a business contract to someone whose proposal is less than honest. But if we have done what God has asked of us, we have gained his approval.

Our failures are redeemed when we share them with others.

Transforming moments: We can shrug off failure and learn nothing from it. Or we can allow God to turn it into a transformational moment. It's up to us.

Failures are transformed—or not—depending on the state of our hearts. For good to come from our failure, it first must be named and consequences accepted. Repentance is the way of Jesus and, if necessary, must be proffered as well.

Learning from our failures requires that we take time to pause and reflect. Perhaps there are personal changes we need to make. Asking questions, such as the following, may help as well:

- Why did this failure occur?
- What did I do that may have contributed to this failure?
- Do I have a tendency to make poor decisions?
- Did I seek wise counsel beforehand?
- Do I depend on myself more than God?
- What can I learn from this failure that will help me in the future?

Turn your failure over to God in prayer, thanking him for the ways in which he redeems failure. Then move forward.

Tammy Darling lives in Three Springs, Pa.

Jesper Noer | www.sxc.hu.com

Books for people who fail

The Return of the Prodigal Son by Henri Nouwen

What's So Amazing about Grace? by Philip Yancey

Failure: The Backdoor to Success by Erwin W. Lutzer

Relentless Love: God's Faithfulness in the Face of Human Failure by Lisa Harper

Congregations as ministry greenhouses

Terry Shue is director of leadership development for Mennonite Church USA.

I remember well the stories of our daughter doing her rotations of clinicals during her nurse's training at Goshen (Ind.) College. Her calling was confirmed and her resolve strengthened as she saw her studies being brought to life.

Such practical, hands-on experience—complementing and building on the good work of formal education—has long been a standard part of preparation for many careers. Most of us can easily imagine the anxiety we would experience if we realized that the pilot for our next flight had taken all the courses but never really flown a plane.

In his book *Ministry Greenhouse: Cultivating Environments for Practical Learning* (Alban Institute, 2008), George M. Hillman Jr. makes the case for pastoral internships by comparing the congregational environment to that of a greenhouse. In an environment that is carefully monitored, artificially controlled for a short time and designed to be a safe, fertile context, growth can happen more quickly and predictably.

As Mennonite Church USA strives to become fully engaged in the mission of God at all levels, leaders from across the church are calling for more opportunities to be created for practice-based ministry learning experiences, understanding that congregations that are actively participating in the mission of God help form missional leaders. To use Hillman's metaphor, we would do well to have more congregations embrace their unique role as greenhouses of leadership development.

More congregations need to embrace their unique role as greenhouses of leadership development.

Many such models are already in place in our churches and schools. Through inquiry programs, students from Mennonite colleges and universities have the opportunity to explore pastoral ministry, service work and/or camping ministry. Our seminaries offer practice-based learning experiences as part of their core curriculum for students pursuing master's degrees as well as in programs for students at a distance, such as Instituto Bíblico Anabautista (Anabaptist Biblical Institute), Journey, STEP (Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry) and Pastoral Studies Distance Education. Yet few congregations today have the vision to create opportunities for people from within their own faith community to explore leadership in ways that are intentional and formative. When done well, it can be a win-win experience for everyone involved.

As a full-time pastoral intern at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., for nine months, I had many opportunities to grow as I tried things for the first time. I remember well the experiences of ministering at my first funeral and my first wedding and a hospital visit with a mentor who not only helped shape what I was doing but (more importantly) helped me think about what I had done once it was over. These experiences—which happened in a safe and caring environment—shaped the pastor I became.

Years later, as a pastor and mentor working with interns called out from the congregation I was pastoring, I grew as I stepped back and looked at the bigger picture of ministry, asking mentees, "Why is this or that important to God and part of our ministry task?" This reflective work helps students and pastors express the theological reality that God is at work in the world and in our neighborhoods.

For the congregation, becoming a greenhouse of leadership development is not about getting cheap labor; it is an opportunity to learn. Emerging leaders have fresh eyes and can create new energy that is contagious, spilling out into the community. Congregations that catch this vision understand their role as part of the process—not replacing our schools but complementing them with the equally important task of providing an environment for practice-based learning. When a local congregation has a vision for growing leaders, there is often a sense of appropriately humble pride in helping develop these loved leaders who will share their gifts in the church and beyond.

What might you do to embody the greenhouse metaphor in your congregation? What barriers do you see that we can work together to remove? How might you help in the development of call, character and competence in someone in your congregation?

You and your congregation can make a difference in developing leaders around you. Give it a try. We could use a few more greenhouses in Mennonite Church USA. TM

Families: where torment and transcendence mix

The fact that this is my last Real Families column made me want to zoom out to bigger-picture reflections. What kept coming to me was this: Families are where we primally and intimately experience torment and transcendence.

I hasten to recognize that torment probably isn't how those blessed with sunnier family experience would put it. And transcendence may not compute for those who have known primarily ways families maim.

So let me simply report why I think of both torment and transcendence. Torment because I've seen so much of it in family layers going back generations. And I see it in communities, often church-related, I participate in. The torment can range across mental illness and the pain such illness inflicts on sufferers and those who love them; suicide; the inability to navigate inherited shadows, passing them on to others; divorce and its trauma for those separating as well as children, relatives, friends. I know a family in which attempts of children to grow up led to being disowned; there is torment here for those disowned as surely the acts of disowning flow from their own wells of anguish.

I could go on, but my point isn't to belabor the torment. I simply want to name it and offer the severe mercy of acknowledging that the torment is not rectified by being Christian but accompanies us as Christians. No example I've offered flows from non-Christian family life. I don't blame Christianity—but those of us in Christian families can empower shadows through believing there must be something non-Christian about them, hence we may take our church selves to church, sequester our family hurts at home, and in so doing often deepen rather than heal them.

I've seen this dynamic in relation to suicide and its frequent companion, depression. Many of us were formed within an understanding that suicide was sin and depression a sign of spiritual failure. Suicide has been viewed as so grievous we can even tell of suicidal loved ones whose bodies congregations wouldn't allow in cemeteries. Seeing association with depression or suicide as shameful has made us reluctant to talk about such matters, to make them part of our church lives or faith journeys, to trust that rather than God's judgment added to the depressive's or the suicide's torment, grace even here, and maybe especially here, can sorrowfully and tenderly abound.

And maybe that takes us to the cusp of transcendence. Because when families are able, imperfectly though truly, to confront their torments, they can become zones of amazing grace.

I don't mean cheap grace. Any family who has walked through the worst of the worst knows that grace is costly, bought by tears, sleepless nights of reliving nightmares, choices to grow even when one's family soil seems too shallow to offer nurture, turning to mentors and therapists and friends and sometimes our own family members with readiness to keep loving even when it hurts like we imagine hell itself hurts.

A friend I'm in touch with only on Facebook but with whom I share roots going back to our growing up together as children of missionaries posted that a giant of our missionary youth had entered hospice care. This stirred us to share memories. My friend remarked of the dying missionary and his wife that they "were probably the first people I met—as a young child—that were very very much in love and full of creative, imaginative energy. I'll never forget them running across a field, hand in hand. I was very young, and there is no photograph of that moment, but it is engraved in my mind."

Chills. Tears. That is a picture of transcendence. Family can carry us beyond our worst to miracles larger than we achieve in isolation. Hand in hand across a field. So classic a filmlike image as to be almost a cliché but in the best sense of cliché. Though we risk cheapening it by repetition, the reason we're thus tempted is that it's so primally and powerfully true.

I think of the day a dying mother, amid a family's shadows, embraced a child. And in that embrace said to one who was long an adult yet also a child tremulous still, "I love you as you are." Transcendence.

I could go on. Because could we with ink the ocean fill, we wouldn't exhaust the love of God or for each other that allows us to turn scripts of even family torment into narratives of transcendence.

Families. It has been a privilege to write about them through 19 Real Families columns. Special thanks to all of you, each carriers with me of family wounds and wonders, who have joined me on the way. TM

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., and Harrisonburg, Va., is dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and publisher of Cascadia Publishing House, LLC.

When families are able, imperfectly though truly, to confront their torments, they can become zones of amazing grace.

Is MCC revisioning only for insiders?

Will Braun is a free-lance writer and former MCC worker. He lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com. This is adapted from a piece that appeared in *Canadian Mennonite.*

How has Mennonite Central Committee's $850,000 Wineskins process—which included broad, accessible and participatory public consultations—narrowed to a process that is only intelligible to senior insiders?

Sixty-two executive directors, board chairs and senior staff from Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and MCC member churches met for a summit in Akron, Pa., last Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. The topic of this rare gathering was MCC's New Wineskins revisioning process.

The leaders talked about four things:

- the proportion of MCC boards that must be made up of church conferences appointees (two-thirds);
- collaborative program management for MCC U.S. and MCC Canada as they take over administration of international programming from MCC Binational;
- the shape of the Joint Ministry Council that will connect the newly expanded MCC Canada and MCC U.S. (a joint standing committee of the two boards);
- an affirmation of MCC's participation in the Global Anabaptist Service Network, an international group of service agencies working toward greater collaboration.

The leaders I've spoken with say the internal reorganization that dominates the Wineskins process in these latter stages need not be of concern to people in the pew. Neither MCC supporters nor recipients of MCC assistance are likely to notice much change, they say, and few of the 2,000-plus people consulted were interested in restructuring. Perhaps that's OK; internal workings can be left to administrators.

But then why have the consultations? What did the 2,000 people tell MCC and how is it reflected in the Wineskins outcomes?

Here are three links:

1. There is a renewed emphasis on MCC being accountable to overseas stakeholders, although this wasn't really new and happened largely via a parallel MWC process.

2. People told MCC that its Anabaptist and faith roots are essential, and MCC has strengthened ties with its member churches, or at least with administrators of those churches, like those at the summit. Most notably, they will have more control over MCC board appointments via the two-thirds quota.

3. Arli Klassen, MCC Binational director, says the reorganization is guided by values expressed in the consultations.

None of these shows robust links between the grassroots consultations and Wineskins outcomes. The roughly $400,000 spent on consultants—whose fees hardly fit the more-with-less category—does not seem to have yielded much.

The Wineskins process seems to have been prompted largely by a need to deal with serious internal tensions. Klassen says MCC was "being pulled apart," and that within 10 years these tensions "could have had a very negative impact." The agency's Canadian, American and Binational offices each had different planning frameworks and foundational statements, she says, and the trend was toward greater differences.

Cross-border discord was another of multiple dynamics at play. "These [national] differences shouldn't matter," says Herman Bontrager, MCC Binational board chair, but part of the Mennonite church is situated within a superpower. Resulting differences, he says, "get into our bone marrow."

Klassen says the various national and other tensions have been dealt with.

These are important developments. Internal matters require effort, and in an organization as diverse as MCC, they will require considerable investment. Administrators involved in the process say the restructuring will better enable MCC to carry out its mission.

But why was a public consultation process grafted onto the internal restructuring? It could have energized the Mennonite community around the urgent needs facing humanity: ongoing disparity, environmental crises, polarization and violence. The consultations could have probed how to overcome an energy addiction that harms the earth and the poor. Our leaders could have held a summit to talk about new ways to apply the best of our faith traditions to the burning needs of the world.

Then, instead of only them being excited, people in the pews—most of whom have long since tuned out—could also have renewed energy for MCC. And perhaps by focusing on larger issues, some of the internal matters would have fallen into place more easily. TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Executive Board discusses Purposeful Plan

Board receives antiracism audit report, addresses deficit spending.

Meeting Sept. 15-17 in Newton, Kan., the Executive Board (EB) of Mennonite Church USA focused much of its attention on a purposeful plan that seeks to help the church move "toward fulfillment of our missional purpose."

During discussion of the Purposeful Plan, board members looked at church planting and evangelism. EB staff member Andre Gingerich Stoner noted that Mennonites "tend to love service, flirt with peace and are allergic to evangelism."

Juanita Nuñez, who represents Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH) on the board, said she sees that our church is shrinking. "We all have the responsibility to share the gospel."

EB member David Boshart expressed concern that we're too individualistic in calling church planters, who often aren't called out of congregations.

Executive director Ervin Stutzman agreed. "We don't have the internal vision in our [congregations] to plant churches," he said, and added that "we need to listen to leaders who have the experience of leading large, growing churches."

The Purposeful Plan, which was introduced at the Pittsburgh 2011 delegate sessions in July, is meant to guide the Executive Board and staff in the next biennium. EB staff drew on 250 pages of responses by delegates in putting together a 24-page document that the board looked at. The plan is organized around the seven priorities agreed on by delegates in Pittsburgh (see box).

The board also spent considerable time discussing the priority of "intercultural transformation." Delegates approved a change to this term in place of antiracism, although some delegate comments expressed concerns.

Valentina Satvedi gives an antiracism audit report to the Executive Board.

Moderator-elect Elizabeth Soto Albrecht noted that "transformation" is an abstract term and wondered if we've given enough attention to oppressions such as racism and sexism.

EB member Patty Shelly agreed. "The dominant culture is always going to want to move toward 'Can't we all just get along?' "

Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, noted that we can't have cultural transformation without the work of antiracism. In South Africa, for example, they emphasized "truth" and reconciliation.

The board decided to change the name of this priority, recognizing that it's a document in process and subject to change. They preferred "undoing racism" to antiracism and added that to intercultural transformation.

Earlier, on Sept. 16, the board received an antiracism audit report presented by Valentina Satvedi, part of a four-person team that audited the Pittsburgh convention in July. The report included 22 recommendations, which the board then looked at and considered which to set as priorities.

Jim Beitler reported for the church resources committee that EB is in "a deficit spending mode," which is affecting its reserves. EB staff is working at austerity measures and have cut expenses already in several ways. A convention coordinator and communications director will not be replaced this calendar year. By meeting in Newton this fall and Goshen next spring, both areas with many Mennonites, the board saves money by staying in homes rather than a hotel. And its January meeting will be by teleconference, another saving in costs.

The board heard from EB staff member Glen Guyton that the theme for Phoenix 2013 is "Citizens of God's Kingdom: Healed in Hope" and will focus on Psalm 24:1, Philippians 3:20-21, Romans 5:1-5 and Ephesians 2:14-22.

Immigration became a focus during the decision to hold the next convention in Arizona because many Hispanics do not feel safe going there. Nuñez said, "The reason there is so much conflict about immigration is that we all need education about it." The board then brainstormed ideas for addressing the immigration issue at Phoenix.

In other business, the board noted delegates' high interest in some kind of Bible reading emphasis. The Purposeful Plan mentions a goal of designating a Year of the Bible and providing resources to help congregations increase their biblical awareness and faithfulness. Shelly said that this need not all be done at once but can be done in stages. Nancy Heisey recommended hearing from churches' own study of the Bible. Soto Albrecht also emphasized the importance of community interpretation.

The board also met with local representatives of Mennonite Church USA-related agencies.—*Gordon Houser*

Seven priorities of MC USA

1. **Christian formation**
2. **Christian community**
3. **Holistic witness**
4. **Stewardship**
5. **Leadership development**
6. **Undoing racism and intercultural transformation**
7. **Church-to-church relationships**

García to succeed Miller at Mennonite World Conference

General secretary-elect reflects on his journey and his 'second conversion.'

Byron Rempel-Burkholder

César García greets the Sung-Chiang Mennonite congregation in Taipei, Taiwan, in May. To his right are MWC General Secretary Larry Miller and Joshua Chang, Sung-Chiang, pastor and former MWC General Council delegate.

As one amateur Mennonite historian likes to point out, the only real Mennonite name is Menno Simons. From there on through history, the rest of the family names are just "add-ons." After a series of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) secretaries named Dyck (1961-73), Kraybill (1973-90) and Miller (1990-2011), the name García stands out historically as a recent addition to the Anabaptist family.

César García's personal story with the Mennonite family began in Bogotá, Colombia, when his mother took him and his sister to several churches in search of a new church home. Eleven-year-old César chose the Iglesia Hermanos Menonitas Dios es Amor (God is Love Mennonite Brethren Church) as the place they would settle.

That choice was the first step on a continuing journey for García, who has come to treasure Anabaptist theology and history and has given his life to scholarship, to mission and to shaping the church from an Anabaptist perspective.

A drive to understand Scripture and have a reasoned faith has characterized García's walk since what he calls his "first conversion" at age 19. After some teen years rejecting God, García found himself depressed and unfulfilled by the existentialism and other philosophies he was pursuing.

"The sense of vacuum was huge," he says.

Under pressure from his mother to come back to church, García attended a Dios es Amor youth meeting, where he was touched by the speaker's assertion: "God doesn't see us as a problem but as a possibility in his hands." Half-believing that he was just "talking to the walls," García told God that he wanted to experience that hope.

"The next day my life was different," he says. "I decided to read the Bible, come back to church and start looking for responses to my atheistic arguments."

Not satisfied with a personal emotional experience, he also began a lifelong pursuit of theological study, mission and church ministry. García worked for six years at a Christian radio station, where he interacted with Christian leaders from charismatic, evangelical and mainline denominations. "It was a time of growing theologically," he says of those years teaching and counseling in his radio ministry and serving as youth pastor and elder at Dios es Amor church.

More formal education at Seminario Bíblico de Colombia, an interdenominational seminary in Medellín, earned him a bachelor's degree in theology and Bible with an emphasis on missiology and gave him tools for study of Scripture. Well-versed in Protestant theology, García was ready for his "second conversion"—to Anabaptism.

Juan Martínez, then president of the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala (SEMILLA), challenged García to complete his education by studying Anabaptism. When García and Sandra Báez, his wife, moved back to Bogotá for church ministry, he took up the challenge, starting with John Driver's book *Eclesiología Radical*.

"It was amazing," he says, "like candy for a child."

A year later, he and Sandra were commissioned as church planters in Bogotá and seized the opportunity to weave their newfound theology into every aspect of Iglesia Hermanos Menonitas Torre Fuerte (Strong Tower MB Church).

"I was excited about participative community, restorative discipline, servant leadership and communal hermeneutic. It was so clear that I wanted that kind of values for our new church."

There are differences, but that doesn't mean we have to fragment.—César García

The spirit of community drew new believers, and the church grew and flourished.

García credits visiting teachers with helping the Colombian pastors gain a deeper understanding of Anabaptist theology. One of them, Mark Baker, tells a story of how García applied the theology in his role as president of the Colombian

García to succeed Miller (continued)

MB Conference. At a national convention a delegate vote on a contentious issue barely passed the required 80 percent approval.

García was not content with the spirit of the debate or with the narrow margin of approval. He invited the delegates who had voted "no" to voice their concerns with conference leaders and encouraged everyone to reflect, pray and be ready for a new vote the next day. The result was a positive vote of 94 percent and a strengthened sense of trust and confidence among the conferees.

As much as he values the ideas and principles of Anabaptism, García also cherishes his relationships in the global Anabaptist community. Fellow leaders in Portugal and Venezuela are now counted among his closest friends because of their work together in the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB).

Other new friendships have developed among MB, Brethren in Christ and Mennonite church leaders in Colombia. After some periods of little interaction or cooperation among the three denominations, "Mennonite Central Committee helped us realize that in reality we were not so different and that many of the suspicions between us were only that.

"I have a calling for eliminating suspicions and rather showing appreciation and respect for differences," he says. "There are differences, but that doesn't mean we have to fragment. The body of Christ is a living organism that demands diversity but also requires love and unity."

One of the bridges García is determined to strengthen is the one between people with a long Mennonite pedigree and those who have come to Anabaptist faith more recently. At the same time, he knows from experience the value of coming to Anabaptist faith by conviction rather than heritage.

"We need to value Anabaptism by conviction," he says, "but we also need to maintain our historical tradition and learn that those things are related and not opposed. We are thirsty for identity. In Anabaptism we find a body that offers that—not just theologically but also historically."

García also wants to strengthen the ability of every national body in MWC to find and share its own cultural expression of Anabaptism. "MWC is relevant as ethnic churches bring our own identity and theology contextualized instead of just copying Western patterns," he says. "Enrichment happens when every church brings that kind of value."

When asked what he values about MWC, García paused, taking delight in mentally scanning the faces that would be around the table at their meetings. "I value the people who are there. Each one is like a treasure," he says. "They bring insights from their different contexts, different gifts, different ways of seeing life and church."

A year and a half ago, search committee facilitator Bert Lobe took García aside after a church service and asked him if he would consider being one of the candidates for MWC general secretary. With typical humility, García thought he must have misunderstood the question.

As soon as he realized that the invitation was genuine, he began a discernment process, talking and praying with Sandra and composing a discernment group to help them determine God's direction. He accepted the nomination, which resulted in his selection as the first general secretary from the Global South.

Few others who know García would consider this appointment surprising. Recognizing his unique gifts of learning and leadership, many have invested in his education and preparation for ministry. From the Dios es Amor congregation, where he began teaching Sunday school and leading the youth at age 15, to MB Mission (the North American MB mission agency) and other supporters who helped finance his theological education in Colombia and the United States, to the Colombian MB conference, which, two years ago, sent him to complete a master's degree at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific Biblical Seminary—people everywhere have recognized his potential for leadership.

Perhaps least surprised of all would be García's mother, Evelia. She was 45 years old when she became pregnant with this son. The doctor advised her that, because of her age, the child was at risk. She pleaded with God for a healthy child and, like the biblical Hannah and Samuel, consecrated her son to God for ministry. With a wry smile García remembers how aggravating it had been to hear his mother recount that story during those rebellious teen years. But today he finds it reassuring—a reminder that God's gifts and blessing are on him from before his birth.

César García and Sandra Báez have two teenage daughters, María and Paula. They have completed two years of study at Fresno Pacific University, a Mennonite Brethren school. César earned a master of arts degree in theology and Sandra completed a master of arts degree in peacemaking and conflict studies. The family is settling again in Bogotá.—*Kathy Heinrichs Wiest for Meetinghouse, a consortium of Anabaptist publications*

Tangie Sheets

Beside César, left to right, are daughters María and Paula, and spouse Sandra Báez.

Canadians commit $7.8 million to drought

More than 230,000 people in Kenya and Ethiopia will receive food.

Two new projects supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee—Canadian Foodgrains Bank member agencies—have been added to the Foodgrains Bank response to the food crisis in East Africa.

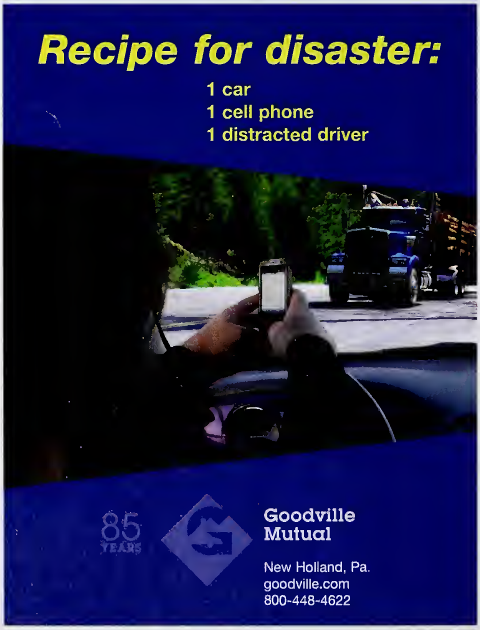
In all, $7.8 million will be used to provide food to more than 230,000 people in Ethiopia and Kenya. Maize, beans, oil and famix, a supplementary food for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women, will be distributed to those in need in both countries.

The Foodgrains Bank has been responding to the drought in East Africa since March, says Joan Barkman, director of international programs. The Foodgrains Bank has received more than $270,000 in donations earmarked for East Africa Drought Relief.

Some of this money will support people in the Shashemene district of Ethiopia, an area affected by drought and poor rains, as well as by recent spikes in food prices. The Christian Reformed organization is supporting a project to distribute food to vulnerable households, including more than 6,000 children under 5 and pregnant and lactating mothers. Flooding in the past and the failure of this year's rains, which usually fall between February and May, have left Shashemene severely food insecure. The area has high levels of malnutrition, particularly among children under 5. This project supports vulnerable people so they can stay in their homes.

In Eastern Kenya, MCC is expanding its support for food-for-work projects. Other projects led by Foodgrains Bank member agencies, including Canadian Lutheran World Relief, are distributing food to vulnerable households in rural Kenya and Ethiopia, where rains have failed and crops have been damaged. Some of the food is also going to pastoralist communities, which rely on livestock for their living and have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

Donations to East African Drought Relief through the Foodgrains Bank are matched four-to-one through a funding agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency. Until Sept. 16, donations to the Foodgrains Bank were also eligible for a special one-to-one matching contribution from Canada's federal government.—*Canadian Foodgrains Bank*



ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7-11)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR STEVE LANDIS (April 25-May 4)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3)
TOUR of LITHUANIA (in partnership with Lithuania Christian College International University) (September 12-19)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (October12-24)

SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (November12-21)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (February 8-20)
MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
THE BRITISH ISLES with DAVID & JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 11-24)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

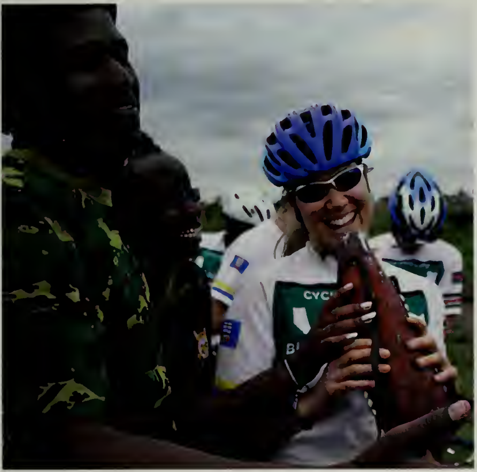
Reg. #50014322

230B Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

Olympian fuels interest in peace clubs

Five Canadian, 14 Kenyan cyclists bike 300 miles to promote peace.

Michael Bade



Canadian speed skater, Cindy Klassen (right) tries a traditional goat milk beverage with other cyclists and supporters of the Cycle for Life tour, including (from left) Simon Macharia and Maureen Chepkemoi.

A 480-kilometer (300-mile) bicycle tour in Kenya that included one of Canada's two most-decorated Olympians has given peace clubs in Kenya a welcome boost.

These peace clubs, supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), encourage Kenyan youth from other ethnic groups to build friendships.

The surge of interest was fueled by a five-day tour in May that included speed skater Cindy Klassen, who won five medals at the Olympic Winter Games in 2006.

The bicycle tour was a joint effort between MCC Kenya, MCC Alberta and the Lari Memorial Peace Museum, which promotes interethnic dialogue and peace education in schools. Five Canadian and 14 Kenyan cyclists participated.

The tour, Cycle for Life: Build Peace, Stop AIDS, was the first part of a two-part bicycle tour that also included a 12-day, 930-mile tour in Alberta that raised $238,000 for MCC-supported peace and HIV programs.

In Kenya, the cyclists rode through a region where 1,300 people died and 640,000 were left homeless because of post-election violence in 2007 and 2008.

MCC has supported the peace clubs since 2008. The clubs use computers and social networking to encourage interaction among youth from different ethnic groups. In addition to providing peacebuilding training manuals and other resources, MCC has provided more than 200 computers and assisted schools with setting up computer labs.

"Peace clubs have been started in many different regions following the trip, and even of late, we have been receiving calls and visitations from different quarters asking that we visit and help them start some," said Waihenya Njoroge, founder and coordinator of the Lari Memorial Peace Museum in Kenya.

About 30 primary and secondary schools plan to start peace clubs in 2011, bringing the total to about 180 schools, said Njoroge.

"That is awesome, that is such good news," said Klassen, who incorporated the cycle tour in her training schedule.

Klassen, the only female cyclist in the group, said children ran alongside the cyclists and were excited to see the gender, geographic and ethnic differences among the cyclists.

They made frequent stops along the way to talk about peace clubs and the importance of finding ways to overcome the bitterness and anger created by past conflicts and violence between ethnic groups. In many communities, government officials, police departments and other dignitaries helped cyclists increase awareness of peace clubs and other Lari Memorial Peace Museum activities.

Klassen said she has learned much about the deep-rooted conflicts and violence in Kenya and was inspired by the commitment of the Kenyan cyclists to pursue peace, healing and reconciliation.

"The hope they had for peace was incredible," she said. "They were so hopeful that this cycle tour would make a difference."

She was also touched by the strong support for peace clubs and how the peace clubs encourage social interaction among youth from different ethnic groups.

"The peace clubs are great," said Klassen. "We heard people say the future of their country is their children and that peace needs to start with people talking with each other."

The Lari Memorial Peace Museum was started in 2001. The organization's commitment to peacebuilding stems from unhealed wounds and painful memories from the massacre in Lari in 1953. Kenya has 42 major tribes, and the Lari Memorial Peace Museum is starting peace clubs in at least one larger primary or secondary school in many of these tribal communities to promote peace education and build bridges of communication across tribal boundaries.—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

Breaking the incarceration cycle

Reba Place Church establishes ministry to help former inmates.

Lisa Stewart

Cook County Juvenile Center

Reba Place Church members led a worship service for inmates at the Cook County Juvenile Center in March: from left are Ken Stewart, Robert Bady, Steven Leib, Elizabeth Tatum, Anne Gavitt, Tony Vargas, Mollie Bady, Adam Vaughan and Helen Hudgens.

John Thomson and Ken Stewart, both longtime members of Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill., know that relationships are a key element of breaking the cycle of incarceration for inmates and their families.

The Reba Place congregation is involved in an after-school program for local children, many of whose parents are incarcerated. The congregation also collaborates with First Presbyterian Church of Evanston on a program in which church members build relationships with children of incarcerated parents by taking them to different events one Saturday per month.

"The after-school program gets the kids off the gang-infested streets and provides a witness to Christ's hope for their futures," Stewart says. "Because their parents are in prison and because of the tough neighborhood they live in, many of these kids grow up thinking that going to prison is the norm."

Thomson and Stewart have also been following God's call to establish a prison ministry at their church. They began forming relationships with juvenile justice system chaplains in Chicago, inviting them to speak at Reba Place. Stewart, a worship leader, then was able to arrange for pastors and worship musicians to lead a Sunday morning service in the juvenile detention center in Chicago every three months. Currently about 15 people are actively participating in the ministry, Stewart says, with another 15 or so discerning how they might become more involved.

Their goal, Stewart says, is to build relationships with inmates so as to help them rebuild their lives in the outside world when they're released—through discipleship and mentoring programs at Reba Place and job- and life-skills programs in the community. They are working with their first former inmate, who was released in late August.

"Inmates don't know how to live outside prison, and that's why so many of them end up back there," Stewart says. "They are given $10 and a bus ticket as they leave and are told to go make a life. But they haven't got a clue as to what that means."

Thomson, a former inmate who accepted Christ during his 19 years of incarceration, says that both outer and inner security are necessary for succeeding outside prison. Thomson connected with Reba Place in the late 1970s—through the last prison ministry the congregation was involved in—and never went back to prison. He has been part of the congregation ever since.

"An inmate who accepts Christ in prison—where everything is running relatively smoothly—is not really tested in that commitment," he says. "What happens when that inmate gets out of prison and doesn't get a job or is fired from a job and wants to throw in the towel on everything? The outer trappings won't bring ultimate stability."

Thomson's wife, Mary, knows what it means to walk with a former inmate on the long journey of healing. She first met Thomson when he was in prison; they became friends later when he came to Reba Place and eventually married. They have been together for more than 30 years.

"Those who get involved in prison ministry need to be willing to ride the waves, because there are lots of storms for even the strongest of Christians who leave prison for the outside world," Mary Thomson says.

The recidivism rate in the first three years of an inmate's leaving prison can range from 50 to 67 percent, John Thomson says. "Before I came to Reba, I bounced in and out of prison," he says.

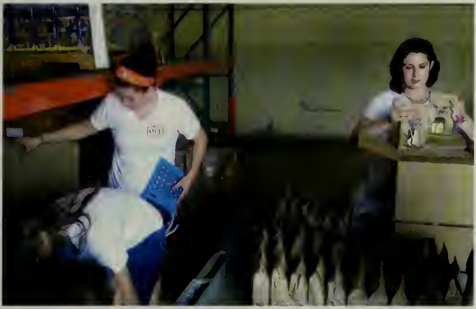
Stewart hopes that in the future, Reba Place's ministry will resemble the post-prison ministry model developed by Manny Mill of Koinonia House National Ministries in Wheaton, Ill., which requires inmates leaving prison not to look for a job in the first four months but rather to build relationships in their homes and churches. He notes that congregational leaders have been careful not to rush into the new ministry. He remembers the congregation's last effort at prison ministry in the 1970s: "We weren't really equipped to do it, and some people burned out."

"We've been meeting with pastors to ask, 'What is the model that's going to work for our church?'" he says. "For right now we're taking new things as they come our way and relying on God to make them happen."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson and Annette Brill Bergstresser for MC USA*

An open DOOR in the city

More than 3,000 short-term participants 'see the face of God in the city.'

Antonio Lucero



Youth from Macalester Plymouth UCC in St. Paul, Minn., sort non-perishable goods at a food bank during their week at DOOR.

It's a Sunday evening in June, and at First Mennonite Church of Denver, Room B06 is wall-to-wall with air mattresses. The building is buzzing as 68 high-schoolers and sponsors pack themselves into the three Sunday school classrooms that will be their living quarters for the week.

One of the DOOR-Denver (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) staff members, Jesus Garcia, watches in amusement. "I'm pretty sure I slept on a bed of nails on my youth group mission trips," he jokes.

Originally "Denver Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection," DOOR was formed in 1986 in Colorado's capital by Mennonites. In 2002, the "D" was changed to reflect the program's expansion to Atlanta, Chicago, Hollywood, Miami and San Antonio. Today, the urban immersion service program is officially a partner with Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA, and will help more than 3,000 short-term participants "see the face of God in the city" this year alone. This week's youth, from First Congregational Church in Colorado Springs, Colo.; First United Methodist in Sapulpa, Okla.; and Macalester Plymouth United Church of Christ in St. Paul, Minn.; quickly realize that although they won't be sleeping on beds of nails, they will be out of their comfort zones.

"We're going to make you as uncomfortable as possible—in a good way," Antonio Lucero, DOOR-Denver's city director, says during orientation. He frames the week by talking about issues facing urban neighborhoods and asks everyone to respect the community and be receptive to what the people they will be serving have to offer in return. "Attitude is very important," Lucero says.

During the week, the youth split up, alternating work sites. One morning, a large group heads for the Food Bank of the Rockies, a sprawling warehouse that distributes food to more than 1,100 hunger-relief agencies in the region.

Teams of three to five fill food orders in scavenger-hunt fashion, rolling wide wooden flats to and fro across the cement floor, dodging motorized lifts and stacking their carts chest-high with dented boxes of Triscuits, bags of produce and cans of soup.

Closer to downtown, youth act as "personal shoppers" at Metro CareRing, a food pantry where counselors develop customized grocery lists for recipients, taking into account family size, nutritional balance and personal food preferences. One volunteer finishes bagging up an order and hesitates before calling out a name to the group waiting in the lobby, nervous about pronouncing it incorrectly.

Meanwhile, at Sunshine Academy, the high-schoolers become a human jungle gym for nine young children. Those sent to the Brothers Development help construct houses for low-income residents, people with disabilities and the elderly. Volunteers at Network Coffee House spend their time mostly just chatting with the people for whom the café is a safe place to get off the street, meet friends for chess and grab a free cup of joe.

One evening, everyone heads to Sun Valley, one of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in Colorado. The youth go door-to-door, distributing flyers for a free cookout at a local urban church called Tha Myx. The church building is painted graffiti-style. The DJ pumps Christian hip-hop music from the sanctuary, where strobe lights and a fog machine set the stage for local rap artists. Some of the youth nod to the beat with the 20-plus community members who have come inside to sit and eat; others play basketball outdoors with the neighborhood children.

> We're going to make you as uncomfortable as possible.—Antonio Lucero

At the final reflection service Thursday night at Red Rocks, a natural amphitheater set in the foothills overlooking Denver, one of the youth strums a guitar and another leads praise songs. Youth share stories about where they saw God in Denver—they talk about being humbled by the generosity they encountered in the people they were trying to serve, impressed by the spirit of their team members and moved by the hope of people they previously saw as hopeless.—*Jessica Farmwald for Mennonite Mission Network*

That will be one Groupee

Denver Mennonites start a system to encourage sharing labor and time.

Do you need a babysitter for an hour? Someone to take your puppy on daily walks? A run to the airport? Help with an online resumé? For some Mennonites, these everyday tasks require only a Groupee or two. The Groupee, a small, wooden token, is exchangeable for the time, labor and materials of other members of a community. A Groupee is valued at one hour of physical work.

Jonathan Moyer and other Mennonites in Denver created the Groupee system and hope to expand it to other communities. As of September, five Groupee groups participate in the system in Denver, with several more forming in the Iowa City, Iowa, and Lancaster, Pa., areas.

Jonathan Moyer

Selecting the name Groupee was like naming a band. One day, Moyer's small group sat around talking about the system when someone threw out the term Groupee, and it stuck, says Moyer.

Moyer hosts Groupee-making parties in his garage to create the wooden Groupees. The process involves woodcutting and an official brand from bike spokes.

"The people who make the Groupees get Groupees," he says.

The Groupee bylaws outline five ways in which the system remains rooted in Anabaptism: bread, baptism, binding and loosing, fullness of Christ and Rule of Paul. Moyer says the Groupee system further propels the productivity that already exists in the community.

"It's a radical expression of the community's love for each other," he says. "We're already so 'in the world and of the world' that the Groupee system is really resonating with people."

Moyer quickly adds that their intention is not for Groupees to "supplant giving and receiving."

"If my friend is sick, I still visit him in the hospital; if he has a baby, I make him lasagna," he says.

However, the structured system allows for Groupee users to meet people and form new connections as well as find reliable babysitters, petsitters, housesitters and more.

"I'll vouch for it being a pretty cool system," says Brad Miller of Denver. "We're spending three Groupees tonight to have someone babysit Silas. I earned these three Groupees by helping a church member water her lawn, took another church member to the airport and babysat another church member's kid."

Jean Kilheffer Hess attended Moyer's seminar on the system at Pittsburgh 2011 and is beginning a group at her church, East Chestnut Street Mennonite in Lancaster, Pa.

"I hope the Groupee system becomes a natural way for us to remember each other as ready-to-help-and-be-helped people," she says. "I'm excited that Groupee offers a loosely organized way for us to extend mutual aid to each other."

The Groupee website facilitates the request in a way other than face-to-face. For example, if a household needs a babysitter for an hour, they will post a request stating they will offer one Groupee. Others in the system will see this request and then the household will accept one offer. Then the website notifies others that the request is filled.

Arlen Hershberger of First Mennonite in Denver says the system works well, although people with desk jobs "naturally have a headstart on responding to requests. We're working on ways to bring greater equity to the group in terms of earning power," Hershberger says.

Moyer is a dissertation-level doctoral candidate at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Moyer hopes this system engages more people across Mennonite Church USA. For more information, go to www.thegroupee.com or send an e-mail to Moyer at jonathanmoyer@gmail.com.—*Anna Groff*

Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans

Everence Financial (formerly MMA) has an opportunity in its Goshen, Ind., office, for a person passionate about charitable giving to serve as Director of Charitable Products and Church Loans. This person will be responsible to provide leadership and product management for charitable products including charitable gift annuities and donor-advised funds.

Qualified candidates will preferably have a law degree; experience in a law practice, development work, or with charitable giving products. Management experience is preferred. Travel required (10 to 15 percent).

Everence is an established, highly trusted, financial services organization with a strong national presence. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. For more information about this position, visit our website, www.everence.com. Send cover letter and resume to: Everence, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; Fax: (574) 537-6635; email: hr@everence.com.

Everence

Camps pave way for Road Scholars

Mennonite camps offer Amish tours, Lewis and Clark programs, bike trips.

Each year, several Mennonite camps across the country host hundreds of participants in Elderhostel, Inc.'s internationally acclaimed Road Scholar programs. The relationship between Mennonite camps and the world's leading nonprofit travel/learning organization dates back several decades, formed largely due to the affordability, hospitality and interesting programs they offered.

Elderhostel, Inc. was founded in 1975 and has grown in the years since to include more than 7,000 programs annually. Black Rock Retreat, Quarryville, Pa., is a longstanding host of Road Scholar programs.

Located in the heart of Amish country, a majority of its Road Scholar programs examine the faith and culture of nearby Amish and Mennonite communities. Black Rock also offers a pair of Pennsylvania garden tours and a historic musical journey.

Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich., also hosts a Road Scholar Amish/Mennonite learning adventure. Amigo Centre also features a popular Lewis and Clark program.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., operates two different Road Scholar programs—a bicycle expedition on 100 miles of the Great Allegheny Passage rail trail and an architecture learning tour of Frank Lloyd Wright homes.—*Brian Paff of Laurelville Mennonite Church Center*

Brian Paff

J. Lorne Peachey, of Scottdale, Pa., guides an Elderhostel bicycling group out of Frostburg, Md., and onto the Great Allegheny Passage rail trail in September 2009.

Ready to retire?
Or just starting out?

We can help you find the right health plan, no matter where you are in your work life. To find out more, go to Everence.com or call (800) 348-7468 ext. 2460.

Everence

2111070

Dale W. Brown Book Award 2011

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies congratulates

Charles E. Hurst
Emeritus professor of sociology at The College of Wooster

and

David L. McConnell
Professor of anthropology at The College of Wooster

Recipients of the **2011 Dale W. Brown Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies**

An Amish Paradox: Diversity and Change in the World's Largest Amish Community
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010

Hurst and McConnell "offer a detailed and nuanced ethnographic account...[and]...avoid stereotyping and essentializing the Amish."
— Jonathan G. Andelson, Grinnell College (from book review in *Anthropological Quarterly*)

Join us for Hurst and McConnell's public lecture at the Young Center on October 18, 2011

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies
Elizabethtown College
Elizabethtown, PA
www.etown.edu/youngctr

Nominations for the 2012 Outstanding Book Award are due December 10, 2011.
Visit www.etown.edu/youngctr for details.

U.S. Army Military Historical Institute, Carlisle, Pa.

The Civil War battle at Antietam, Md., Sept. 17, 1862, claimed 22,000 casualties in one day. The Mumaw Meetinghouse of the German Baptist Brethren (today, Church of the Brethren) is in the background. This photograph combines images of war and religion with the battle-scarred peace church meetinghouse.—Steve Nolt

150 years after U.S. Civil War

Mennonites did not believe in slavery or in fighting to end it.

In the closing months of the U.S. Civil War—a horrific conflict that pitted North against South—President Abraham Lincoln ruminated on religion and war.

"Both [sides] read the same Bible and pray to the same God," he noted, "and each invokes His aid against the other."

Lincoln was certain that slavery had been the moral problem at the heart of the conflict. But he was less certain that either warring party could assume the exclusive blessing of a just God.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of that war, a fratricidal conflict that remains a defining national event, staggering in its enormity. Unlike today's wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, which can seem distant and which involve relatively few American soldiers, the Civil War visited its destruction on U.S. soil and killed nearly one in five men of military age in the South, and one in 16 in the North. (Comparable figures in 2011 would mean more than 6 million deaths). Everyone knew at least one person who did not come home from the war. And tens of thousands of men who did return were amputees, so that well into the 20th century, Americans continued to be surrounded by bodily reminders of the war's cost.

The war also changed American society—most dramatically by bringing an abrupt end to slavery and freedom to 4 million enslaved Americans of African descent. But the war ended slavery without any accompanying reckoning of slavery's effect or legacy.

Like Lincoln, historians have asked what role religious belief played in this colossal conflict that still casts a shadow across America's politics and system of race relations.

In his recent book, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, George C. Rable, a Bluffton (Ohio) University graduate who is a Civil War historian at the University of Alabama, has carefully explored how Christians justified the war theologically and made religious sense of the death and destruction.

For Mennonites, who lived on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Civil War became the crucible in which their Christian convictions and American identity collided. As a people who rejected slavery and rebellion and who also rejected war as a means to suppress rebellion and end slavery, they fit few of the categories of their time.

Mennonites and slavery: The origins of the Civil War were complex, but slavery was the hub around which all other aspects of mounting tension in some way turned. Few white Americans living in the first half of the 1800s viewed slavery with the sort of moral clarity that those in the 21st century do.

By the 1850s a sizable majority of Northerners opposed slavery, but only a small number did so because they cared much about enslaved people themselves. Most opponents were concerned not so much with the plight of black slaves as with a fear that the institution of slavery limited white workers' economic opportunities. Mennonites opposed slavery on theological grounds, but their theology also shaped their opposition to it.

By 1780, Pennsylvania had enacted a gradual emancipation law. But slavery remained entrenched in Maryland and Virginia. In all these places, estate and census records yield no hard evidence that any Mennonites owned slaves. This silence matches the testimony of contemporary observers, such as Quaker abolitionists, who were impressed with Mennonites' antislavery example.

In 1809, Baptists in Page County, Va., also saw antislavery as a Mennonite distinctive. There, Mennonites considered affiliating with the Baptists but could not make the union work because, in the Baptists' words, the Mennonites "would keep no slaves, swear no oaths nor bear arms in defense of their country."

Virginia Mennonites held slaveholding to be grounds for excommunication. In 1837, when bishop Peter Burkholder described what baptismal candidates "have to observe," he was clear that, since "all are free in Christ, they must take no part in slaveholding or in trafficking with them in anywise." Or, as Virginia Mennonite Mary Brenneman put it, "There will be no slavery ... in heaven and ought to be none here."

At the same time, few Mennonites, North or South, embraced abolition as a political movement. Their two-kingdom theology regarded social reform as the domain of worldly political responsibility. Nineteenth-century Mennonites agreed that divine purposes could be realized here-and-now, but only within the church.

It seems that a handful of Mennonites were involved in the Underground Railroad, which helped hide runaway slaves and ferry them to freedom. Mennonite voters in Pennsylvania also supported public policies against the spread of slavery into western territories by voting consistently for antislavery Whig and Republican politicians.

Whatever form Mennonite opposition to slavery had taken, the coming of war in 1861 raised new challenges for peace church members. Mass rallies drummed up volunteers, and governments considered strategies for drafting armies of unprecedented size.

The Mennonite experience of war, as revealed in letters and church correspondence, focused on sons facing conscription or being enticed to enlist. Christina Herr of Medina County, Ohio, wrote her cousin "the sorrowful news" that Christina's three oldest brothers had gone to fight for the Union. In the same letter her father, John Herr, poured out his sorrow: "I little thought that we was raising children to go to war ... but it really now is so and I am often overcome that I can't keep back the tears when I think of the thousands which have already gone to an untimely grave." John's wife, Barbara, "wept bitterly day and night," but "tries to be resigned to [God's] will."

Although some Mennonite young men did volunteer, they were not typical. Records show that sizable majorities of Mennonites across the North were conscientious objectors. In Wayne County, Ohio, members of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, for example, let it be known "that there are things in which we must obey God more than men and that to do military service conflicts with our confession of faith."

Depending on the draft (state, federal or Confederate), there were two possible means of exemption: paying a hefty commutation fee or hiring a substitute, which was also quite expensive. Mennonite men made use of both provisions. In Pennsylvania, longstanding civic ties allowed Mennonites to cultivate political alliances with powerful congressman Thaddeus Stevens and governor Andrew Curtin to secure exemption in an atmosphere less hostile to nonresistant scruples.

In contrast, Mennonites in the Midwest often found themselves politically isolated. In response, leaders there began urging members to abstain from all partisan activity, even voting, arguing that conscientious objection would be justified only if nonresistant people were consistently apolitical.

Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, PA

Henry H. Derstine (1841-1900), of Bucks County, Pa., fled to Canada to avoid the Civil War draft but moved back to Pennsylvania following the war.

For Mennonites in Virginia, the war was more immediate and painful. Even before the shooting started, men in Virginia had to cast votes in a referendum on secession—which everyone knew was a referendum for or against war. Despite intense public pressure, a remarkable number of Mennonites in Rockingham County voted against secession or abstained (which their opponents considered a 'no' vote). A sense of alienation for Mennonites in the Confederacy was keen. As non-slaveholders who had opposed secession and then refused to take up arms, they were clearly outsiders.

Virginia Mennonites also bore the brunt of war as multiple military campaigns ran through the Shenandoah Valley and engulfed them in terror and destruction. Armies confiscated horses and grain and burned houses, mills and barns. War "is a dreadful curse upon a land," bishop Jacob Hildebrand of Augusta County, wrote. Fighting often raged near his home, and "at every discharge of the cannon the window sash would shake, and we trembled."

Military exemption was more difficult in the Confederacy, and Virginia Mennonites systematically hid men liable for conscription and spirited them out of rebel territory. The extent of this resistance network, in which women played prominent roles, was revealed only after the war was over, and certainly stands as the largest act of collective civil disobedience ever undertaken by North American Mennonites. For example, Abraham and Magdalenah Heatwole ran "a sort of headquarters" for such activity despite the "constant danger from having so many coming to our place for concealment and refuge while getting ready to go north."

Margaret Rhodes, a woman in her mid-30s, concealed draft resisters and transported correspondence between family members and fugitives, going "a distance of six miles myself to deliver letters sometimes, leaving my five children with my mother-in-law."

War, memory and identity: What memories persisted from the Civil War? For white Americans generally, the desire to valorize all the death and destruction quickly eclipsed African-American concerns. A story of national reunion framed the war's memory and meaning in a way that rendered the role of race invisible and paved the way for Jim Crow segregation and a Northern notion that once slaves were free, racial injustice had been taken care of.

Jacob Yoder, a Mennonite schoolteacher, devoted himself to improving education for former slaves in Virginia after the war. But he was unusual.

Some painful Mennonites memories centered on military substitutes. Christian Krehbiel of Summerfield, Ill., later a leader in the General Conference Mennonite Church, had hired a substitute when he was drafted in 1864. But after the substitute returned "looking like a skeleton," Krehbiel supported him financially for the rest of his life and came to question the ethics of substitution.

In Chicago, Mennonite entrepreneur John F. Funk began the war as an eager patriot but—perhaps influenced by visiting a prisoner of war camp near his home—became a confirmed pacifist and wrote *Warfare: It's Evil, Our Duty*. In 1864, he launched a church periodical, *Herald of Truth*, which promoted peace teaching and spoke for many Midwestern Mennonites who felt like political and social outsiders.

Even in its absence the Civil War shaped Mennonite identity. The war, of course, had no equivalent in Ontario; Mennonites there experienced neither civic alienation nor the family heartache that war engendered south of the border. That absence would contribute to an emerging continental divide, marked in part by a less suspicious stance toward the state on the part of Canadian Mennonites.

For Mennonites in the United States, the war and the memories of war were lens and prism, focusing and distinguishing peoplehood along lines that would influence for generations their religious, regional and ethnic sensibilities and their churches' interaction with American society.

A hundred years later, Vincent Harding, the African-American historian and, at that time, Mennonite pastor in Atlanta, mused on the place of peace people in an American society still saddled with the racial legacies of the Civil War. Harding recalled "our persecuted Anabaptist forefathers," who "were a minority, forever in danger of their lives, always threatened with swift destruction of their property." He wondered, Had the American descendants of those martyrs, now free from the immediate affliction of war on their own soil, "forgotten what it is to rejoice in suffering for Christ's sake, forgotten our comradeship with the outcasts, forgotten how it was to be fools for Christ's sake?" Without such a lively historical memory, could any people hope "to be ministers of reconciliation, wherever there is conflict and strife?"

The heirs of those who fought and those who refused to fight in the 1860s still live with such questions.—*Steven M. Nolt, professor of history at Goshen College, and author, with James O. Lehman, of* Mennonites, Amish and the American Civil War *(Johns Hopkins, 2007)*

U.S. Civil War

Confederate states: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee

Dual governments: Kentucky, Missouri

Border states: Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia

Territories: Oklahoma, Arizona

Source: Wikipedia

Peace and reconciliation in war-torn Ivory Coast

MMN project offers training to 25 counselors in area where war hit hardest.

Laura Livingston

Participants in the reconciliation training seminar share testimonies.

As the government of Ivory Coast treads carefully toward unifying the nation after 10 years of civil war, typified by a recent post-election crisis that claimed the lives of at least 3,000 people, a Mennonite Mission Network worker, together with a team of Ivorians, is urging Christians to refocus on being living examples of peace, love and reconciliation in society.

In a post-traumatic healing and reconciliation training project, church leaders learn systematic ways to counsel those who have been ravaged by war, to forgive in order to heal communities and help the nation move toward unity. Martine Audeoud, who along with her husband, Gary Wittig, are Mission Network associates serving with the West Africa Alliance Seminary (la Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de l'Alliance Chrétienne), has been coordinating the project's training efforts.

Seminar sessions, which last three to four hours per day over three to four days, were held in June, July and early August. A two-member team went to Duékoué (where the war hit hardest) in western Ivory Coast for a week to train about 25 counselors on how to counsel community people directly.

"They learn to identify where their hurts are," Audeoud said. "They learn who Christ is and that he died for their hurts, and that because of his death and resurrection they can grant forgiveness. They learn that forgiveness can be a once-and-for-all thing but that they may have to revisit it over and over as the painful thoughts come back."

In letters to Mennonite Mission Network, Audeoud described some initial results of the seminar training:

- A whole village was burned down, and the wells had been poisoned so that people from one ethnic group would not go back. The pastor from that village, after attending a healing and reconciliation seminar, said he was now ready to go back to the village and greet his neighbors again.
- A pastor and his family were in their house when their own neighbors decided to burn down his house. He took his family inside the bedroom, and they started praying. The Lord suddenly stopped the fire, and the house didn't burn. However, the pastor had left the village after that with his family and had asked to be moved to another pastorate. After attending the healing and reconciliation seminar, he canceled his request to be transferred and said he wanted to go back to the village and serve the people that had been his enemies.

Reconciliation is sorely needed in the Ivory Coast, a once bustling and prosperous cocoa-producing West African nation that was a beacon of success to sub-Saharan Africa. A former French colony, Ivory Coast (also known as the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire), has been mired in a horrific war rooted in political strife that feeds on ethnic and religious differences. In November 2010, President Alassane Ouattara defeated the incumbent, former president Laurant Gbagbo, in an election recognized by the international community as legitimate. However, Gbagbo refused to leave office, resulting in a bloody crisis between his southern supporters and the northern supporters of Ouattara.

In April, the new government finally apprehended Gbagbo and his wife, Simone, putting them under house arrest. The Ouattara government has called for a truth and reconciliation commission to deal with the human rights abuses that followed the election. If the new government mishandles the case, violence could erupt again.

Audeoud, who is French, said religious differences could have fanned the flames of war (the north is primarily Muslim, while the south is primarily Christian) but did not because, generally, Muslims did not retaliate against Christian aggression in support of the former president. Many Christians feared the new president, who is Muslim, would oppress Christians, despite President Ouattara's wife, Dominique Nouvian Folloroux, being Catholic and their children being evangelical Christians, Audeoud said.

The faith-based training project is not part of the government's reconciliation efforts but is respected and welcomed by the community because the theological seminary is known for not having taken sides during the conflict, Audeoud said.
—Wil LaVeist of Mennonite Mission Network

What will Mennonites sing?

MennoMedia asks churches to help shape future song collection.

Congregations throughout Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada are being asked this fall, winter and spring to keep track of all the songs they sing. Their research will help determine what the next collection of music for the church will look like.

What emerges may look like the current *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Or it may be PowerPoint files or another emerging format. It may be all the above. The planners are calling the end product a "song collection."

Who are the planners? They are the Binational Worship Council. The council, formed in 2009, is co-chaired by Dave Bergen of Mennonite Church Canada, Marlene Kropf of Mennonite Church USA and Amy Gingerich of MennoMedia. Supporting the project is MennoMedia, which was formed from a merger in July. It has offices in Harrisonburg, Va., and Waterloo, Ontario.

The planners are asking questions such as, What kind of worship resources are needed for Mennonite congregations in the future? and, How is music used in worship?

The worship council developed a four-session study guide, *The Heart of Mennonite Worship: Five Vital Rhythms*. The council encourages congregations to use the study guide sometime between last month and April 2012.

The study guide can be ordered free by calling 800-245-7894 in the United States and 800-631-6535 in Canada or downloaded at no cost at www.MennoMedia.org/worship.

Congregations are also urged to participate in a survey that will let the planners know what they sing each week during an eight-month period. They can go to www.MennoMedia.org/worship and click on "survey."

There are three easy ways to complete the survey: (1) Fill it out online each week, (2) download a chart to fill out and send in at the end of the survey period or (3) send worship bulletins to MennoMedia via e-mail or regular mail.

Singing has become almost a sacrament for Mennonites.—Amy Gingerich

In July, delegates at the Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada conventions had a chance to respond to presentations on the song-collection project. They also listed their congregations' "heart songs," meaning songs that have become beloved by their churches.

One delegate said his congregation is so diverse that what is a "heart song" for 60 percent is not for the other 40 percent.

The U.S. delegates were assigned to table groups, and one table reported agreement on the importance of songs that focus on community rather than on the individual.

The Canadian delegates reflected considerable diversity in styles of worship and tastes in music. Some noted that the diversity leads to hard feelings in churches. Other times the diversity brings richness to the worship experience.

Amy Gingerich, co-chair of the Binational Worship Council and MennoMedia's director of print media, says, "Singing has become almost a sacrament for Mennonites. Our past hymnals have become books of prayer and our song collections an entrance into how we experience God."

Adds Gingerich: "A song collection is years in the making, and hearing from congregations is the right place to start as we seek to learn what songs have been embraced by our faith communities."

The current hymnal used by Mennonites and Church of the Brethren—*Hymnal: A Worship Book*—will be 20 years old in 2012. Two Mennonite supplements were added over the years: *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*.—*Steve Shenk of MennoMedia*

Top 15 Mennonite 'heart songs'

Delegates at the Mennonite Church USA convention in July voted on the top "heart songs" in their congregations. A tally showed the following top-15 ranking:

1. Praise God ("Mennonite anthem")
2. Rain Down
3. My Life Flows On
4. Great Is Thy Faithfulness
5. Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord
6. Amazing Grace
7. How Great Thou Art
8. What Is This Place?
9. Be Thou My Vision
10. Will You Let Me Be Your Servant
11. Wonderful Grace of Jesus
12. Guide My Feet
13. Holy, Holy, Holy
14. Here in This Place
15. The Love of God is Greater Far

All songs are in Hymnal: A Worship Book *or the more recent supplements with the exception of "How Great Thou Art," which was in the previous hymnal.*

50 years of mowing lawns and plowing snow

Goshen College observes 'The Year of Kennard Martin, Leader in Service.'

Everett J. Thomas

Martin in the cab of his mower on Sept. 12.

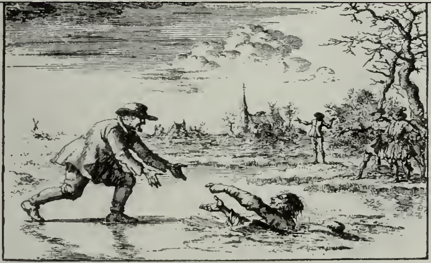
Goshen (Ind.) College president James E. Brenneman opened the new school year by encouraging first-year and continuing students to become "servant leaders." Speaking Aug. 31 at the first all-campus convocation of the 2011-2012 academic year, Brenneman offered a humorous, reflective and challenging call to action during an address titled "Culture for Service Leadership: A Paradox Worth Living."

He gave a special welcome to Kennard Martin, a physical plant employee who completed 50 years of service to the college on Sept. 6.

"He embodies a servant's heart. His is a labor of love," Brenneman said of Martin. "He gets up before dawn, stays late when needed. He has mown our lawns, plowed our walks in the winter, day in and day out, for 50 years."

Brenneman presented Martin with a plaque and proclaimed 2011-2012 as "The Year of Kennard Martin, Leader in Service."

Brenneman congratulated a visibly surprised Martin, and the audience responded with a standing ovation that lasted for several moments.—*Goshen College*

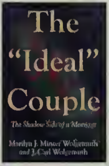


Have you seen this picture?

I'm doing research on *Martyrs Mirror* and what it means to contemporary Mennonites. Do you have stories or memories about receiving a copy, reading it, or hearing others talk about it? What does *Martyrs Mirror*—or particular stories or pictures—mean to you or your family?

Please send me a letter or email with your stories, thoughts, and memories (the more specific, the better), along with information about your church affiliation. I may follow up with further questions.

David Weaver-Zercher
Box 3053, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027
dzercher@messiah.edu



New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC

Rethinking Religion: Beyond Scientism, Theism, and Philosophic Doubt, Alan Soffin. An atheist drawn to religion explores a "God" who is of the cosmos rather than also beyond it as theists affirm. 436p $29.95

The Jesus Factor in Justice and Peacemaking, C. Norman Kraus, whom *Lisa Schirch* says "Meets practitioners of peacebuilding . . . addressing our dilemmas, theories, and tactics with theological rigor." 128p $12.95

The "Ideal" Couple: The Shadow Side of a Marriage, Marilyn and Carl Wolgemuth, whose " story is tragedy and blessing, suffering and commitment, mercy and grace." —*Ann Showalter* 128p $14.95

Cascadia
www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

Sommers heads wall hangings project

Eloise Yoder completes service with Sister-Link program.

Photo provided

Eloise Yoder and Rebecca Sommers (right) examine wall hangings sent to Mennonite Women USA as part of the Sister-Link program.

On Aug. 1, Eloise Yoder completed her term of service with the Mennonite Women USA (MW USA) Sister-Link wall hanging program and turned over her files of history and stories to Rebecca Sommers, Goshen, Ind., who is assuming leadership of this program.

Sommers, a delegate to the board of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), is familiar with the needs to which MDS responds following natural disasters.

"This program has grown to be more than we imagined in the beginning. It is a much bigger gift to homeowners than what we gave ourselves credit for," she says.

MW USA's Sister-Link program provides networking to build women-to-women relationships locally and globally. Sister-Link connects hands and hearts through praying, letter writing, resource sharing and face-to-face visits. The wall hanging Sister-Link with MDS has captured the hearts and creativity of women across the church as it invites fabric artists to create wall hangings for homeowners who lost their homes during disasters such as hurricanes or tornadoes.

Initiated informally in 2003, at least 170 quilted wall hangings have been donated to the program for individuals whose homes were rebuilt by volunteers with MDS. Since 2004, this Sister-Link has been formally connected with MDS and has been coordinated by volunteers for MW USA. Elaine Good, Lancaster, Pa., began this creative service as she completed her term as president of the board for MW USA.

Following her tenure, Eloise Yoder, Archbold, Ohio, coordinated the program for three years.

"I first heard about this Sister-Link opportunity from an article in the Ohio Conference *Evangel,"* Yoder says. "I felt good taking over this project because I spend half the year in Florida and cannot participate in the women's group at my church. I could make wall hangings and therefore still contribute."

Like her predecessors in this role, Sommers is staying connected with MW USA following her term of service as president of the board. Sommers and former coordinator Elaine Good visited MDS headquarters in Lancaster to learn firsthand about the needs and their response process, as well as to share information about MW USA and the women who create wall hangings for homeowners whose homes are rebuilt.

Yoder's files include a list of all the quilters who have contributed a wall hanging, plus two albums of photos and stories about the quilters and the recipients of the quilts. Reading the list of the quilters is a walk through the women of the Mennonite church across the country and an introduction to women of other faith traditions who also were inspired to share their artistic skills. Quilters learn by word of mouth about this opportunity and call the coordinator to inform her when they are making wall hangings. The coordinators of this Sister-Link find it rewarding in many ways.

"Just last week," Yoder says, "someone whom I have known for many years called to say she had a wall hanging to contribute. She is coming to Ohio and will personally deliver it to me."

Sommers, who recently delivered her own creative wall hanging to new homeowners in Johnson Bayou, Cameron, La., reported that many of the recipients choose the color for their walls or other room décor based on the colors of the wall hanging.

"We thought perhaps this (Sister-Link) had run its course," Sommers says, "but MDS personnel said they are not done with this. They want us to continue to make wall hangings for the homeowners whom they assist."

Sommers and Yoder say there are many quilters who send their wall hangings, comforters and bed-size quilts directly to disaster areas. No one knows the exact count, but they are certain the numbers are higher than the 170 officially recorded.—*Mennonite Women USA*

CALENDAR

Oct. 8-9, **Berean Fellowship Church, Youngstown, Ohio**, will celebrate ***50 years of service***. Theme is "A Jubilee of God's Faithfulness." There will be a dinner program on Oct. 8 and a special morning worship celebration on Oct. 9. Please join us for the Word of God, good music, food and renewing of friendships. Contact us at nladuma@att.net or phone 330-743-9273.

Join **North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.**, in celebrating our ***75th anniversary*** Oct. 30. A special worship service will be held at 9:30 a.m., followed by lunch at noon. Afternoon sharing will be begin at 1 p.m. Call 574-533-4255 or e-mail northgoshen@frontier.com for more information.

Men's retreat at **Camp Friedenswald**, Nov. 11-13. For men ages 12 on up. Enjoy the peaceful woods as we gather for fun, fellowship, great food and the words and music Chuck Neufeld will share. Register online at www.friedenswald.org or call the Friedenswald office at 269-476-9744.

WORKERS

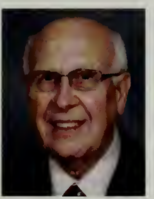
Nickel, David, of Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship in Chapel Hill, N.C., was licensed for prison chaplaincy ministry at the Orange Correctional Center, with Alamance/Orange Prison Ministry, on Aug. 21.

Soto, Elizabeth, transferred ordination credentials from Iglesia Menonite LaPaz, Armenia, Colombia, for her work as chaplain and denominational minister, to Laurel Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Stahl, Joseph, was ordained as lead pastor at Manheim Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa., on Aug. 14.

OBITUARIES

Alderfer, Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Delp, 90, Sellersville, Pa., died Aug. 13 of bladder cancer. Spouse: Wellington K. Alderfer (deceased). Parents: Ephraim and Grace Wismer Delp. Children: Terry W., Edward, Steven D., Christine Moyer, Mary Anne Alderfer; 17 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Rockhill Mennonite Home, Sellersville.



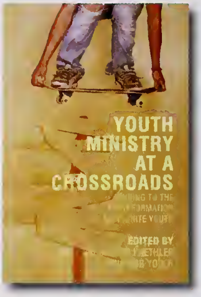
Breckbill, Willis "Bill" L., 85, of Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 17 at his home. He was born to the late David and Anna Leaman Breckbill on April 28, 1926, in Willow Street, Pa. On Aug. 14, 1954, he married Ina Ruth Krabill of Louisville, Ohio. She survives, along with their four children: David (Anita Stoltzfus) of Lincoln, Neb., Bruce (Jill Detweiler) of Kidron, Ohio, Don (Carola Horsch) of Stoughton, Wisc., and Anne of St. Paul, Minn. Also surviving are eight grandchildren (Hannah, Ben, Max, Greta, Madlen, Isaiah, Anna, and Elizabeth), a brother, Parke, and a sister, Marion (Clarence) Rudy. Two brothers, Raymond and Richard, and a sister, Alice (Roy) Charles preceded him in death. Bill's career reflected his love of the Mennonite Church. In addition to pastoring congregations in Biglerville, Pa. (Bethel); Canton, Ohio (First Mennonite); Cambridge, Ontario (Preston); and Goshen, Ind. (Waterford); he also undertook interim pastoral assignments in Portadown, Northern Ireland; Archbold, Ohio (Central); and Elkhart, Ind. (Southside Fellowship and Hively Avenue). He served the broader church as a member of the General Board of the Mennonite Church and then as moderator (1977-1979). Between pastorates, he was conference minister of both the Ohio and Eastern Mennonite Conference and the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Bill was a Goshen (Ind.) College and Goshen Seminary graduate (1954/1955) and later became a member of the Goshen College board of overseers. He was the speaker on *The Mennonite Hour* radio broadcast for two years. He was one of the driving forces behind creating the memorial garden at Waterford Mennonite Church where his cremains were scattered. Bill was a man who cherished and built relationships, loved people, and advocated for the marginalized in society and the church. He enjoyed expanding his horizons and took many opportunities to educate himself on theological and social issues. He was a big man with a friendly smile and gentle presence. Most importantly, he was a devoted and fun-loving husband, father and grandfather. His funeral was held at Waterford Mennonite Church on Aug. 21.

Dicob, Paul J., 88, Lowville, N.Y., died May 26. Spouse: Frances Yousey Koziol Dicob. Spouse: Mildred M. Zehr (deceased). Parents: Benedict and Cecelia Carrier Dicob. Child: Rodney; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 31 at Croghan Mennonite Church, Croghan, N.Y.

Friesen, Cornelius J., 82, Altona, Manitoba, died July 29. Spouse: Margaret Toews Friesen. Parents: Jacob and Agatha Stoesz Friesen. Children: Alan, Dennis, Sharon Friesen, Colleen Derksen; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

New
from Herald Press



Youth Ministry at a Crossroads
Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth
Andy Andy Brubacher Kaethler & Bob Yoder, editors

Youth work isn't for the faint-hearted. It's tender and tough, requiring savvy to understand the allurements facing our young people today. What you will find in this book, co-published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, is wisdom and encouragement from a variety of people who have dedicated themselves to youth work.

$15.99 USD/$18.50 CAD
www.mpn.net/YouthMinistryataCrossroads

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of MennoMedia.

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

Goertz, Florence Gering, 90, Freeman, S.D., died Aug. 31. Spouse: Reuben Goertz (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Carolyn Gering. Children: Richard, JoEllen Kerner, Bernette Weier, Paulette Ohnstad; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Graber, Amanda Miller, 93, Goshen, Ind., died July 13. Spouse: Allen Graber (deceased). Parents: Noah J.L. and Mattie Miller. Children: Velda Hershberger, Devon, Nelson, Idella Chupp; nine grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: July 16 at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hallman, Abram Percival, 105, Hilton Head, S.C., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Esther Yoder Hallman (deceased). Spouse: Lois Yoder Hallman. Parents: Eli S. and Melinda Clemens Hallman. Children: James, Joanne Dahl; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hartman, Kathleen Newton, 53, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Max Hartman. Parents: James and Evelyn Kenison Hartman. Children: Michelle VanDiepenbos, Jeff Heckenast, Eric Heckenast; four grandchildren. Funeral: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Iwanowski, Leon, 86, Wayland, Iowa and Slonim, Belarus, died July 31. Spouse: Katija Dashkiewich (deceased). Parents: Waldimer and Luba Iwanov. Children: Wesley, Victor, Janet; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Kanagy, Irene Julia, 61, Indianapolis, Ind., died Aug. 15 of cancer. Parents: Norman Beachy Kanagy and Rachel Byler Kanagy. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Kennel, Anna Mae Honsaker, 91, Gap, Pa., died Aug. 21 of pulmonary metastases. Spouse: Earl J. Kennel (deceased). Parents: Ray and Nora Metzler Honsaker. Children: Kathy K. Fox, Carol A. Ginder; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Garden Spot Chapel, New Holland, Pa.

Lehman, Betty Kathleen Plank, 90, West Liberty, Ohio, died Aug. 25. Spouse: Kenneth Lehman. Parents: Joe and Gertrude Yoder Plank. Children: Tom, Ken, Carol Troyer, Sam, Ed, Tim, Ric; 25 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Neufeld, Anna Ruth Cutrell, 77, Loveland, Colo., died Aug. 5. Spouse: Archie Wilbur Neufeld (deceased). Children: Daniel, JoEllen Neufeld, Cheryl Dawn Neufeld; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

Preheim, Otto, 102, Freeman, S.D., died Aug. 2. Spouse: Sieglinda Waltner Preheim (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Frances Kaufman Preheim. Children: Ron, Gayle, Lyle, Noreen Gingerich; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Regehr, Henry, 71, Waterloo, Ontario, died Aug. 22. Spouse: Esther Regehr. Children: Jeff, Doug; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 29 at Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

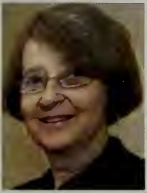
Roggie, Frieda M. Jantzi, 77, Lowville, N.Y., died Aug. 16. Spouse: Ralph A. Roggie (deceased). Parents: Mahlon and Ruth Ressler Jantzi. Children: Elizabeth Steria, Joyce Zehr, Lois Roberts, Glendon; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Croghan Mennonite Church, Croghan, N.Y.

Roggie, Gladys, 79, Lowville, N.Y., died June 9. Parents: Reuben and Verna Yousey Roggie. Funeral: June 13 at Naumberg Mennonite Church, Castorland, N.Y.

Rourke, Laura Rempel, 50, Waterloo, Ontario, died May 21. Spouse: Andrew Rourke. Parents: John and Mary Rempel. Children: Daniel Wiens, Luke Wiens, Dayna Wiens, Andrea Rourke. Funeral: May 26 at Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

Schiedel, George, 89, Waterloo, Ontario, died Aug. 16. Spouse: Mary Schiedel. Children: Fred, Phil, John, Andrew; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 19 at Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Olin Wayne, 87, Whitewater, Kan., died Aug. 23, from injuries sustained in a car accident. Spouse: Alma Isaac Schmidt. Parents: Arthur and Ruth Schmidt Schmidt. Children: Darryl, Carmen; six grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater.



Seitz, Kathryn "Kass" Faye Hunsberger, 73, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 5 of multiple myeloma. Spouse: Kenneth Seitz, Jr. Parents: Paul and Edna Ruth Hunsberger. Funeral: June 25 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Shantz, Clifford H., 96, Goshen, Ind., died July 14. Spouse: Viola Louise Stonebraker Shantz (deceased). Parents: Ananias and Anna Steckle Shantz. Children: Karen Gerber Bontrager, Rachael Miller, Maribeth Kennel, Michael Shantz, Kim Shantz; 13 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; 11 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Short, Lois A. Wagler, 83, Archbold, Ohio, died June 8. Spouse: Rollin Short (deceased). Parents: John and Ada Hirschey Wagler. Children: Rhonda Stuckey, Andrew, Steven, Jan Litogot, Sue O'Riley, Lisa Smith; 16 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 11 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Toews, Frieda Elizabeth Quiring, 100, Cincinnati, Ohio, died July 15. Spouse: David H. Toews (deceased). Parents: Abraham P. and Elizabeth Goosen Quiring and Katherine Goertzen Quiring. Children: Rowena Dennison; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at Sturm Funeral Chapel, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Tovey, Fannie Troyer Springer, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died June 1. Spouse: Paul Tovey (deceased). Spouse: Carl Springer (deceased). Parents: Jerry and Sovilla Mullet Troyer. Children: Karleen Holland, Nancy Rupp, Robert Springer, Edward Springer; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Weldy, Marjorie Ellen Conrad, 96, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Dwight E. Weldy. Parents: Peter R. and Barbara Eicher Conrad. Children: Cheryl Martin, Mary Clasen, Ruth Fitz-Gerald, David Weldy; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Wiebe, Jacob G., 90, Altona, Manitoba, died Aug. 30. Spouse: Justina Wiebe (deceased). Parents: John H. and Maria Ginter Wiebe. Children: Dorothy Driedger, Jacob, Edward; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Wiebe, Mary Funk, 66, Altona, Manitoba, died Aug. 11. Spouse: Leslie Wiebe. Parents: David and Katharina Stoesz Funk. Children: April Deutsch, Steve Lukacs; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Yoder, Raymond John, 86, Springs, Penn., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Dorothy Virginia Ash Yoder. Parents: John D. and Lydia Tice Yoder. Child: Norma Jean Doyle; one grandchild. Funeral: August 6 at Springs Mennonite Church.

BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY

Health and Fitness Education Center opening fall 2012!

60,000-square-foot complex

Performance arena

5,000-square-foot weights and fitness center

Sports medicine center

Classrooms and multipurpose space

Track the progress on the webcam daily!

www.bluffton.edu/hfec

TM DIGITAL EDITION

Available digitally

The Mennonite is now available in a **digital edition** you can read on your computer screen or tablet.

To sign up, e-mail **editor@themennonite.org** or call **800-790-2498.**

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
Stories and photos from Pittsburgh 2011
be the BRIDGE

RESOURCES

Jesus, Paul and the Gospels by James D.G. Dunn (Eerdmans, 2011, $21) discusses these issues: Where, why and how the Gospels were written and what we should expect from them; the reliability and historicity of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry; the continuing significance of the apostle Paul and his teaching; and points of continuity and discontinuity between the teaching of Jesus and Paul—and how to bridge the two.

Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life by William A. Dyrness (Eerdmans, 2011, $26) points out that all of humanity's creative efforts testify to our intrinsic longing for joy and delight and our deep desire to connect with others, with created order and especially with the Creator.

Ecclesial Repentance: The Churches Confront Their Sinful Pasts by Jeremy M. Bergen (T&T Clark, 2011, $39.95) tells the story of ecclesial repentance in recent decades and explores the theological issues it raises.

A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good by Miroslav Volf (Brazos Press, 2011, $21.99) explores major issues of faith: In what way does the Christian faith come to malfunction and how should we counter those malfunctions? What should a Christian's main concern be when it comes to living well? How should we go about realizing a vision for human flourishing in relation to other faiths and under the roof of a single state?

Presence: Giving and Receiving God by J. Alexander Sider and Isaac S. Villegas (Cascade Books, 2011, $22) collects sermons and meditations that bear witness to a grace that disarms our guardedness and makes room for us to fall into the love of God.

Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace by John Philip Newell (Eerdmans, 2011, $18) articulates the deep longings for peace that unite Jews, Christians and Muslims. It provides prayers for each morning and evening of the week.

Who Is My Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face About Islam—And Themselves by Lee C. Camp (Brazos Press, 2011, $17.99) introduces Christian and Islamic views on war and peacemaking and examines Christian non-Christian terrorism.

Everything Is Everywhere by Carrie Newcomer (2011) is a collaboration between American folk singer-songwriter Newcomer and the Indian family of sarod players, Amjad Ali Khan, Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan. All profits from the CD will go to the Interfaith Hunger Initiative (www.interfaithhungerintiative.org).

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

R	E	D	E	E	M	E	R		S	T	A	N	D
T		U			D		T		D		D		E
S	D	N	G		R		V		U	N	T	T	E
E		G		U	N	S	E	E	N		D		R
N	E	E	D		T		R		D	W	E	E	E
		D			N						S	A	Y
S	A	N	D		G	R	D	U	N	D		M	
D			E				A			R	D	D	E
E	T	E	E	D	S		T			T			A
T			T		E		H	E	A	V	E	N	S
E	D	N	G	T	N	G		E		E		T	T
Y			H		D			S		S	O	N	
	S	A	T	T	S	E	T	E	S		N	E	W

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Bluffton University invites applications for ***two full-time, tenure-track positions*** beginning fall 2012: European history and visual art. Review of applications begins Oct. 15 and continues until positions are filled. Please visit our website at www.bluffton.edu/about/employment for position responsibilities, requirements and process for submitting an application. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Reunion Vocal Band's first album, ***Hunger For Beauty***, is now available for download at iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes) and Amazon (www.amazon.com). $0.99 per song or $8.98 for the album

Contract editor needed for **Rejoice!**, the quarterly devotional magazine published by MennoMedia and Kindred Productions. Editor solicits devotionals from writers, edits them, works with copyeditors and proofreaders and manages the production schedule. Application deadline Nov. 15. Click on "Job Openings" at www.MennoMedia.org for complete job description, application form and instructions for applying. Contact AmyG@MennoMedia.org for more information.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking a ***professor of Anabaptist studies and historical theology***. Responsibilities include teaching with distinction and advocating for Anabaptist and Mennonite perspectives in conversation with other Christian traditions. Qualifications include a Ph.D. in Anabaptist studies or historical theology, passion for the church and the significance of these areas of study for the church, and ability to communicate well and inspire students. Teaching experience and international or cross-cultural experience a plus. By Nov. 15, send letter of application, CV and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or electronically to rslough@ambs.edu. Full job description at www.ambs.edu/employment.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking a ***professor of faith formation and culture*** to teach at the interdisciplinary intersection of congregational education, spiritual development, cultural hermeneutics and theological contextualization, exploring Christian faith formation across the life span. Qualifications include a terminal degree (Ph.D. preferred), ability to communicate well and inspire students, and passion for the church and faith formation as a missional vocation. Preparation for ministry, teaching experience and cross-cultural or international ministry a plus. By Oct. 31, send letter of application, CV and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or electronically to rslough@ambs.edu. Full job description at www.ambs.edu/employment.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time, ongoing ***faculty position in Spanish*** beginning Fall 2012. Ph.D. required. Teaching experience required. Native speaker preferred; near-native fluency required. Responsibilities are to provide leadership for a robust Spanish and Spanish education program and in the further development of a foreign language program; interest in teaching classes in all upper-level Spanish with preference for candidates with expertise in linguistics, pedagogy and literature. Nine-month contract. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three reference letters to Dr. Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. ugdean@emu.edu (540) 432-4141 http://www.emu.edu. Applicants will be acknowledged by letter. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Ski Timberline, W.V., $99 complete two-day ski package now extended through Dec. 26 and 27; two nights bunkhouse lodging; lift ticket; regular ski rental; beginner ski lesson; five meals 800-392-0152

One approach to money, faith and work

Sharon Kniss wrestles with these questions living on a modest income and working a "normal" 40-hour job every week. She attends Our Community Place, in Harrisonburg, Va.

The intersection of money, faith and work is tricky, challenging and confusing. For those of us who are affluent or middle-class, we may even avoid talking about the implications of our faith on our work and financial habits. Rachel Farrell, however, has chosen to face these implications and has made decisions in her life that would be seen as crazy to many in mainstream society, even to many Mennonites.

Rachel Farrell, 26, with her husband, Brian, has decided not to hold a regular job. She realized it would be easy to spend lots of time in a job in order to get money—and more money than she needs. Rachel knew she could get caught in that cycle and would live less intentionally than if her income matched her actual need. Therefore, Rachel works part-time—1½ days each week she makes bread for a local baker, and one day per week she helps do yard work, along with Brian. She also makes bread in exchange for produce from some friends. This work provides enough income, though the line between having no money and having enough money is thin.

Rachel Farrell, works only part-time in order to be more available to people in need.
Photo provided

This choice was partly motivated by the desire to have more time to be available as needs arose in the community. Rachel worships with the Early Church (a Mennonite congregation) and spends time with people who associate with Our Community Place (a community center and organization) and live in her neighborhood, one of the low-income areas of Harrisonburg, Va. One week she was at home wondering what her day would entail when a friend called to see if Rachel could accompany her to the hospital. This is not uncommon, and Rachel values being available at the moment of need—something often not possible with a more "normal" job.

Since her income only meets her basic needs, she also relies on foot, pedal and public transportation. This means she has increased interaction with her neighbors and people who do not use cars, whether by choice or necessity. Rather than seeking out a community like Our Community Place, where middle-class people with normal jobs can come to associate with "the disenfranchised," Rachel is in a position that feels more authentic; she bumps into this community daily by being a part of it rather than visiting it.

Choosing not to have a normal job is not embraced in broader culture. Though Rachel has found a fairly supportive community, there are still friends and family members who do not understand her choice. By making this choice, Rachel has discovered how close her identity and self-worth were tied to having income, stability and a normal job. Her choice is not a desire for laziness or leisure. Instead, Rachel believes everyone is called to work—knowing that meaningful work will have rewards, such as food and income. Although Rachel and Brian are more often in a perceived state of need, they've sought not only to be recipients of generosity from others but to offer without asking for something in return.

All these choices are grounded in Rachel and Brian's commitment to follow Jesus and his call to be redemptive in the world. However, Rachel reflects that biblical guidance appears paradoxical on wealth, work and the poor, and Jesus' actions and words are difficult to translate except for an emphasis on loving relationships. Commands to do good things for the poor/fatherless/widow are clear, but Rachel wonders about the efficacy of her approach and the ultimate importance of these commands. Without clear directives for daily living there is a challenge to chart the right course, though Rachel is committed to live into that challenge with purpose and conviction and with humility. She respects the inherent diversity in the body of Christ, where each of us is called to be a different part of the body, which means we don't all look alike.

Rachel's bold witness has provoked me to ask hard questions about my approach to money, faith and work—a wrestling that is a challenge in our society and in our churches. TM

DVD REVIEW

Of Gods and Men (PG-13) tells the true story of a group of Trappist monks stationed with an impoverished Algerian community under threat by fundamentalist terrorists. This beautiful, haunting film shows the courage and fear, the humanity, of the monks as they decide whether to leave or stay. Their hymns and prayers fit perfectly with events and form a witness. One hymn says, "For you weep through the oppressed and look upon us with a shining gaze that reveals your forgiveness."—*Gordon Houser*

BOOK REVIEWS

ROB BELL
A BOOK ABOUT
AND THE FATE OF EVERY PERSON WHO EVER LIVED
LOVE WINS

Rob Bell alarmed the American Evangelical community with his **Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived** (HarperOne, 2010, $22.99) by posing tough questions. Here's one: "Have billions of people been created only to spend eternity in conscious punishment and torment, suffering infinitely for the finite sins they committed in the few years they spent on earth?" Although its stream-of-consciousness style makes it akin to reading a sermon, *Love Wins* would be particularly helpful for young adults and others who are jaded by Christian expressions that seem judgmental and unloving.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Ministry with Prisoners and Families: The Way Forward, edited by W. Wilson Goode Sr., Charles E. Lewis Jr. and Harold Dean Trulear (Judson Press, 2011, $17.99) addresses the critical need for African American churches to minister to the needs of incarcerated people and their families. This excellent resource calls on churches to minister both to those incarcerated and to those reentering society. It affirms both ministry and advocacy. It includes alarming statistics, such as that "black women constitute the fastest-growing population in U.S. prisons today." It asks, "What if congregations treated incarceration as they do hospitalization?"—*gh*

Beauty and faith in Paul Simon's music

Music often touches our pain and our longing for beauty in ways that go beyond mere words. And sometimes that touch comes from unexpected places.

Paul Simon, who has had a successful career with Art Garfunkel, then as a solo artist, has written and recorded many memorable songs that have become part of our culture—"Sounds of Silence," "Mrs. Robinson," "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "Graceland," to name a few.

Simon, who turns 70 this month, is not one of the more popular musical artists today, but he continues to make music that is both complex and accessible. His latest album, "So Beautiful or So What," fits that description but also presents a strong religious theme throughout.

This is surprising, since Simon, though Jewish, says he is far from religious. Yet he also acknowledges that "God comes up a lot in my songs."

Let's consider some of the nine songs on this CD. The opening song, "Getting Ready for Christmas Day," uses excerpts from a 1941 recording of a sermon with that title by J.M. Gates, an African-American preacher and gospel singer. The song includes the reminder, "When Christmas comes, nobody knows where you'll be."

In "Rewrite," which is really about rewriting one's life, Simon sings, "Help me, help me, help me, help me. Thank you! I'd no idea that you were there." Later he repeats the "help me" and adds, "Whoa! Thank you for listening to my prayer."

Several of the songs are ballads, and the most beautiful one is "Love and Hard Times." Simon has a unique way of combining humor and pathos, and here he sets the scene in a way that only an artist not constrained by religious rules can:

"God and His only Son
Paid a courtesy call on Earth
One Sunday mornin'
Orange blossoms opened their fragrant lips
Songbirds sang from the tips of Cottonwoods
Old folks wept for His love in these hard times.
'Well, we got to get going,' said the restless Lord to the Son
'There are galaxies yet to be born
Creation is never done.' "

The song deftly weaves together this humorous, offhand conversation with an aching declaration of love to a woman and ends thus:

"But then your hand takes mine
Thank God, I found you in time
Thank God, I found you
Thank God, I found you."

What better description of our humanity and our walk of faith than this dance of "love" and "hard times"?

Simon goes on in "Love Is Eternal Sacred Light" to set that against the evil that is darkness, "a demon that feeds on the mind."

"Love and Blessings" presents "simple kindness / Ours to hold but not to keep."

In the title track, he sings, "Life is what you make of it / So beautiful or so what" and warns against "mistaking value for the price."

In liner notes, Simon describes the mystery and fascination of the creative process. He writes: "The trick is, as I know it, to care like hell and not give a damn at the same time or, as more elegantly proposed here, 'So Beautiful or So What.' "

In other liner notes, Elvis Costello writes that this album "rejects the allure of fashionable darkness and the hypnosis of ignorance—better to contemplate and celebrate the endurance of the spirit and the persistence of love."

Yes. TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Marlene Birky, Valparaiso, Ind.
Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Lovina Troyer Brandt, Baltic, Ohio
Jim & Eunice Brenneman, Denver, Colo.
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Eleanor Buskirk, Petoskey, Mich.
Miriam Cochran, Hollsopple, Pa.
Hettie Conrad, Hesston, Kan.
Jean E. Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Katherine Garber, Elizabethtown, Pa.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Julia Gerber, Sugarcreek, Ohio
Robert Gerber, Sugarcreek, Ohio
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Evelyn Good, Urbana, Ill.
Lorene Good, Minier, Ill.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Ernie & Lois Hess, Lancaster, Pa.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Art Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Laverda McGowen, Middlebury, Ind.
Joann Miller, Bigfork, Mont.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Ruth Miller, Lakewood, Colo.
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Anne Moyer, Lansdale, Pa.
Ruth Mumaw, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Carl & Ella Peters, Henderson, Neb.
Howard & Pat Piggee, Fredericksburg, Va.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Alice Souder, Grottoes, Va.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Lillian Stoltzfus, Morgantown, Pa.
Jerry Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Marilyn M. Whitman, Vancouver, Wash.
Luke & Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

Editor's note

Each year our annual readers survey reveals that the crossword puzzle (page 61) is the least popular feature in *The Mennonite*. In June we sent a letter to those who return their crossword puzzles to us, exlaining that we may not be able to continue the expense of the puzzles with so few readers participating. While we received some contributions toward the annual cost, the following letter was typical of the responses we received:

This is in response to the June 23 letter in which you indicated that the crossword puzzle in The Mennonite *is not paying its way with only 1 percent to 2 percent participation. In that case I think it should be discontinued. I enjoy completing the puzzles but will discontinue mailing them.*—Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation' filed Oct. 1, 2011, for The Mennonite, publication no. 17-2340, published once-per-month (12 issues in preceding 12 months) at 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Elkhart County, IN 46526. Phone. 574-535-6051. Annual subscription price, $46.00. Publisher, The Mennonite Magazine Board; editor, Everett J. Thomas, at above address. Owned and published by The Mennonite, Inc., Goshen, Ind. (above mailing address), a church-related non-profit organization, tax exempt under code section 501(c)(3). Stockholders owning 1 percent or more of total stock, none. (No stock issued.) Known bondholders, etc., none. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

Extent and Nature of Circulation

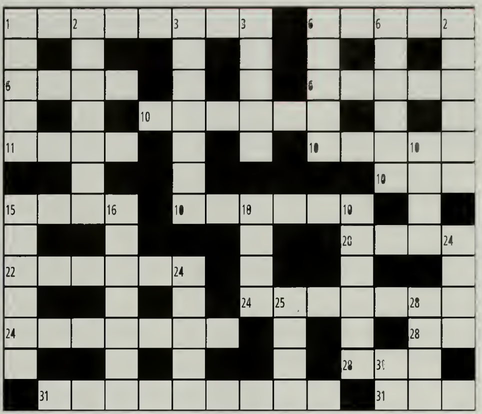
A. Avg. total number of copies (net press run) each issue during 12 months, 9,094. B. Avg. paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Avg. paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541, 9,267. C. Avg. total paid and/or requested circulation, 9,267. G. Avg. total distribution, 9,267. H. Copies not distributed, 200. I. Avg. total copies, 9,467. J. Avg. percent paid and/or requested circulation, 98.

A. Total number of copies (net press run) each issue during preceding 12 months, 8,302. B. Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Paid/requested outside-couty mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541, 8,308. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation, 8,379. G. Total distribution, 8,379. H. Copies not distributed 200. I. Total copies, 8,579. J. Percent paid and/or requested circulation, 97.

I certify that all information furnished in this is true and complete.
Everett J. Thomas, Editor

How well do you know your hymns?

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



All hymns come from *The Mennonite Hymnal*, Herald Press, 1969 and the *Church Hymnal*, Mennonite Publishing House, 1956.

ACROSS

1. "Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus our blessed ____ …"
5. "I ____ amazed in the presence …"
8. "It shall forevermore endure the saints' and angels' ____ ."
9. "Come let us all ____ to sing …"
10. "I love to tell the story of ____ things above …"
11. "… Every hour I ____ Thee …"
12. "Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to ____!"
14. "The first Noel the angel did ____ …"
15. "From sinking ____ He lifted me …"
17. "Lord, plant my feet on higher ____ ."
20. "O tell of His might, O sing of His grace, whose ____ is the light …"
22. "The hill of Zion yields a thousand sweets, before we reach the heav'nly ____ …"
24. "Lord, lift me up and let me stand, by faith on ____ tableland …"
27. "Lord, I am fondly, earnestly ____ …"
28. "____ came upon the midnight clear …"
29. "We praise Thee, O God, for the ____ of Thy love …
31. "I love to tell the story, because I know it's true, it ____ my longings …"
32. "Morning by morning ____ mercies I see …"

DOWN

1. "Christ the Lord is ____ today …"
2. Faith of our fathers, living still, in spite of ____, fire, and sword …"
3. "Early in the ____ our song shall rise to Thee …"
4. "When peace, like a ____ …"
5. "Amazing grace! How sweet the ____ …"
6. "While we do His good will, He ____ with us still …"
7. "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore, very ____ stained within …"
13. "O ____ of God, I come, I come!"
15. "____ and tenderly Jesus is calling …"
16. "Perfect submission, perfect ____ …"
18. "His ____, His covenant, and blood, support me in the whelming flood …"
19. "One word of Thy supporting breath ____ all my fears away …"
21. "In Christ there is no ____ or West …"
23. "… where He ____ we will go, never fear, only trust and obey."
25. "… Naught be all ____ to me save that Thou art …"
26. "There were ninety and ____ that safely lay …"
30. "____ Christ the solid rock, I stand …"

RECOGNITION

To be recognized in our December 2011 issue, send the completed puzzle and form below to: The Mennonite, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

DEADLINE:

November 1, 2011

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE/PROVINCE

ZIP/COUNTRY CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to the crossword puzzle may be found on page 57.

(Continued from page 5)

guidelines and the documents established by the church in the past").

But what does crossing these bridges actually mean, and what will such crossing accomplish? Persecution by Lutherans in centuries past isn't hindering the mission of Mennonite Church USA congregations in the present. On behalf of our ancestors in the faith, we accept your apology. Next. I always suspected "conversation rooms" were a way to control contentious dialogue and make sure that if it did happen it didn't disrupt the convention. It's a nice distraction from the reality that the delegate assembly didn't do anything resembling a move toward true reconciliation on those contentious issues, especially gay (ex)inclusion. The delegate body seemed to jump at the chance not to have to deal with contentious issues by abdicating their role in bringing and voting on resolutions that could bring much needed clarity to congregations. Which brings me to the third bridge: Stutzman's clear support of the status quo. I'm not as impressed with this move as is Thomas. I would be if the status quo was clear and life-giving. But the reality is, it isn't. There are serious issues involving gay (ex)inclusion, not the least of which involves an ordained pastor performing a same-sex union—against the clear teaching of Mennonite Church USA—without being disciplined. No matter how you feel about that, it's clear that the status quo in terms of membership guidelines and past statements hasn't led to clarity of practice among Mennonite Church USA congregations.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

In the August editorial, Everett Thomas says, "Those who wish to change the church's teaching position on homosexual practice are not happy to now have an executive director who unashamedly supports the church's statements." This says, indirectly, that past executive directors did not support it. Is there some evidence to think that Ron Byler and Jim Schrag were ashamed of the church's position? I think there's a Ninth Commandment problem with this sentence in the editorial.—*John D. Thiesen, Newton, Kan.*

The 'silenced middle'

I would like to join with "A Compassionate Friend" who wrote "The Middle has been Silenced" (Letters, September) and seek a better understanding of our homosexual brethren who remain faithful to the church's teachings.

I am new to the Mennonite faith, although I've been a Christian since 1968. My husband and I joined First Mennonite Church of Bluffton, Ohio, in November 2008, and we were delegates to the 2010 Central District Conference (CDC). Until a picture of a Pink Menno demonstration at the Columbus 2009 convention appeared in our local newspaper, I had not given much thought to homosexuals in the church. During the next year, I read and listened, trying to keep an open mind. In our newspaper, a battle raged between homosexuals and the "Christian" population. The Christians continually hammered hatred and judgment, and the homosexuals proclaimed that their sexual orientation was not a choice.

At the 2010 CDC meeting, I attended a workshop concerning the homosexual issue, believing that I would hear the "third side" of the issue. I was disappointed that no one was there to be a voice for the homosexual Christians.—*Cheryl Treece, Findlay, Ohio*

Ancestors were illegal immigrants

Thanks for printing J. Nelson Kraybill's article ("My Ancestors Were Illegal Immigrants," August). As a descendant of an illegal immigrant to Canada, I am in sync with every point he makes. It drove me to the Joseph Bauman family genealogy and the story of his arriving in Canada.

Their encounters with Native peoples are mentioned but never in a way that gives them any ownership in the land, even though they and their families had lived there for centuries. I grew up on the farm Joseph settled, as it had passed through the younger sons to my father. One would think life only began when Joseph arrived, and what happened before had no value to the white man. I often wonder what gives us Europeans the sense of entitlement we seem to have.—*Ina Frey, Stouffville, Ont.*

J. Nelson Kraybill's concepts are significant. However, I question whether Native Americans viewed Mennonites as illegal immigrants. After Anabaptists fled Swiss persecution, William Penn traveled from England to Germany with an invitation to Penn's woods as he made proper payments and extensive peace agreements with the Native Americans. In the 1700s, the Mennonites and Quakers of Lancaster (Pa.) County lived at peace with Native American neighbors.

Three questions: If only Quakers and Mennonites settled Pennsylvania, could it have become a permanent, peaceable kingdom? While Mennonites did not participate directly in genocide, do they carry guilt for buying land after it was "cleared" of its human inhabitants? What difference does it make when ancestors were farmers buying cheap land, and today's immigrants set up landscape services because buying a piece of land is out of reach?

Compassion to find ways to legally absorb hurting immigrants into our society is definitely something to use to encourage peace building.—*Joanne Hess Siegrist, Bird In Hand, Pa.*

Corrections

In the September issue, page 19, S. Roy Kaufman is identified as pastor of Salem Mennonite Church. He retired Aug. 31, 2010.

On page 44, Lynn Parks is misidentified. She is a woman and is associate pastor at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, not youth pastor.

Investing in hope: The hope that saves us

In this hope we are saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.—Romans 8:24-25, TNIV

As Christians, we live with the hope that the way things are now are not the way they will always be. In the Apostle Paul's words, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (v. 18).

Certainly there is plenty of suffering in our world today. As in Paul's day, the whole creation appears to groan in travail. The natural disasters of the last two years bear witness to this truth. According to the Associated Press: "Earthquakes, heat waves, floods, volcanoes, super typhoons, blizzards, landslides and droughts killed at least a quarter million people in 2010—the deadliest year in more than a generation." The global reinsurer Swiss Re reported that these 2010 disasters caused $222 billion in economic losses.

If 2010 was the deadliest year on record for natural disasters, 2011 has already set a record as the most expensive year at a cost of $265 billion. The last nine months have also introduced the greatest variety of spectacular disasters in U.S. history—flooding, heat waves, drought, wildfires, tornadoes and hurricanes, each leaving a swath of destruction in its wake.

Even so, natural disasters are only a part the immense suffering in the world. Likely the greatest suffering is brought about by the tensions between peoples of the world. The Arab Spring and the Libyan rebellion testify to the human toll of corrupt and oppressive government. The 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks poignantly reminded us that the United States is engaged in the longest war in our history, without an end in view. Furthermore, the last century has seen more Christian martyrs than any other such period in history. One might readily ask, "Where is God in the midst of this suffering?"

In this environment, hope may be hard to come by. As in Paul's day, we groan to be delivered from such suffering. The hope that saves us from despair comes from the inner confidence that God is at work in the midst of suffering. The best evidence of God's work is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. In spite of suffering, we are being transformed day by day. Furthermore, the one "who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:27). The Spirit within intercedes for us with groans too deep for words.

This is what gives us the confidence that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (v. 28).

Although there are different ways to translate this verse, I don't think any of them mean that God controls everything or makes everything happen in a particular way. Rather, I take this verse to mean that in every difficult circumstance, God is at work to redeem it. I have confidence that in spite of natural disasters, humanly imposed suffering or my own foibles, God is at work for the good.

In spite of natural disasters, humanly imposed suffering or my own foibles, God is at work for the good.

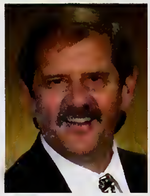
With Paul, I confess that there is nothing in all of creation that "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 39). Therefore, in our pursuit of the missional church, I am persuaded that we invest in hope as we look for the signs of God's redemption in the midst of the suffering of the world. TM

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

###################################CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 942 01-JAN-13 66994 P-1 P71
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 949
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

A resolution on church statements


Everett J. Thomas

The 2011 convention in Pittsburgh generated no denominational statements or resolutions. That was by design. But perhaps the 2013 gathering should consider a resolution that establishes what the Mennonite Church USA confession of faith, denominational statements and resolutions mean—and what they don't mean.

Executive director Ervin Stutzman surprised many delegates on July 8, when he cited some past statements establishing membership protocols and then said after each citation, "This is what the church has said, and this is what I believe."

That such affirmation from our top denominational leader should come as a surprise to so many reveals deep differences about the authority of statements made by the church—even if those statements emerged after long periods of discernment, prayer, Bible study and sensitive word smithing.

We need agreement on what Mennonite Church USA statements mean—and what they don't mean.

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, for example, was approved overwhelmingly in 1995 after years of careful sharing and feedback across the former General Conference and Mennonite Church denominations.

But there remains a lack of agreement about how to understand what this critical document means for accountability and discipline. Some members of Mennonite Church USA believe it is a "teaching document"—holding out for us what our best discernment has produced. In this view, the ideals framed by the confession set a direction toward which we are all called.

Others, however, understand the confession of faith to be a set of beliefs that define who we are as a communion. In this view, those beliefs can appropriately be used to decide whether leaders and congregations are in compliance. If not, such noncompliance is grounds for discipline for those with ministerial credentials or for congregations.

This difference creates mischief. The most recent example: Western District Conference leaders and, subsequently, the conference gathering decided that a pastor's ministerial credentials were in order after she performed a same-sex marriage ceremony ("Decision Not to Discipline Pastor Stands at WDC," September).

This example reveals a fault line within our denomination that cannot be ignored for long. For leaders, congregations and conferences that believe church statements establish rules, such an action by another area conference appears to be a clear case of noncompliance. But some in Western District—and others—do not understand denominational guidelines to be binding on an area conference. Their big-tent model of inclusion allows for significant freedom for congregational discernment and autonomy. This model also claims significant autonomy for a conference.

Why call now for discernment regarding church statements when the Phoenix 2013 convention is nearly two years away?

One of the reasons given for no resolutions at Pittsburgh 2011 was that some delegates did not want to vote on resolutions—especially controversial ones—without their congregations processing them first. Some delegates represent area conferences; such delegates may also want to know what the conference thinks about such resolutions before voting.

Given the amount of time needed for crafting such a resolution, distributing it for discernment, collecting responses and revising the language, 20 months is not a lot of time.—*ejt*

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

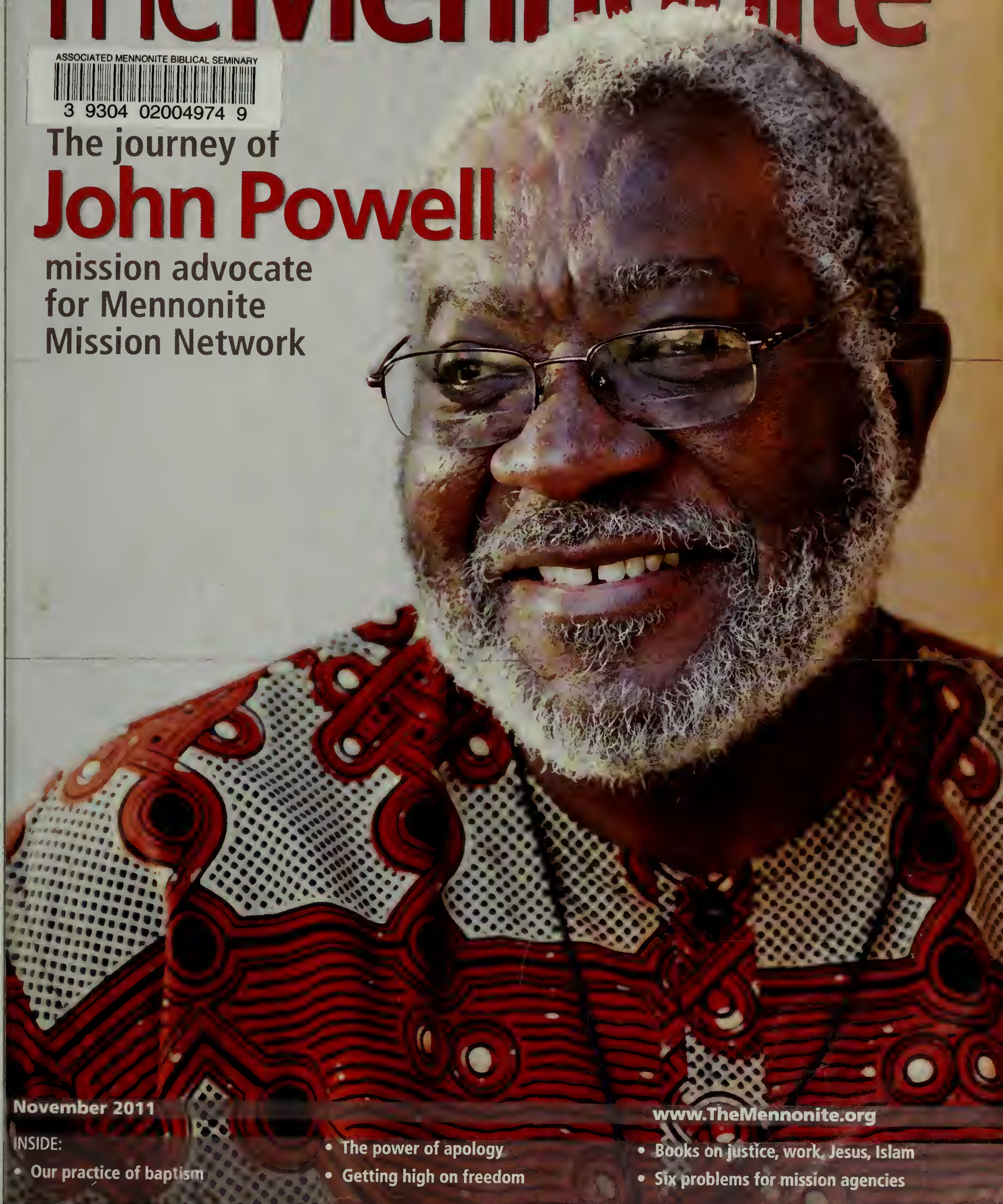
AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART, IN

TheMennonite

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02004974 9

The journey of John Powell

mission advocate
for Mennonite
Mission Network



November 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- Our practice of baptism
- The power of apology
- Getting high on freedom
- Books on justice, work, Jesus, Islam
- Six problems for mission agencies

Mennonite Mission Network

The mission agency of
Mennonite Church USA

2011 GIFT CATALOG

The Perfect Gift

A window into God's perfect love—From front to back: Cristian Vaqueros, Milenca Rios, Sebastian Justiniano and Herlan Zambrana, children in the *Samuelito Guardería* Day Care in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a Mission Network partner.

Photo by Alan Stucky, pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church in Harper, Kan.

God showed amazing love for us through the gift of Jesus. At Mission Network, we continue to share that love through mission and ministry.

Look for the gift catalog on our website and discover ways you can help continue the work of God's perfect gift to us.

www.MennoniteMission.Net/
Donate/Pages/GiftCatalog.aspx

Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872
Español: 1-877-665-6662

TheMennonite November 2011 | Volume 14, Number 11

CONTENTS

12 From (missionary) Baptist to missional Anabaptist—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

16 'Tell someone I am here' —Keith Kingsley

18 On timidity and treason —James R. Krabill

21 Our practice of baptism —Anna Groff

26 The power of apology —Ted Lewis

29 Thanksgiving: a prime rib dinner and no burning trees—Cat Rabenstine

32 We came to Argentina to live for good —Mario Snyder

37 Mutual aid part of health coverage plan —Laurie Oswald Robinson

38 EMU alumna wins Nobel Peace Prize—Mike Zucconi

39 Professor killed in home invasion—Richard R. Aguirre

40 60 churches join '100 Shades of Green'—Jennifer Halteman Schrock

43 Peanut Butter Project fights malnutrition—Anna Groff

46 Mennonite women find their voices—Laurie Oswald Robinson

52 The Mennonite, Inc., board welcomes new members—Gordon Houser

ON THE COVER: Photo by David Fast

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
46 News Analysis
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite

November 2011 | Volume 14, Number 11

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite*, or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: Everett J. Thomas
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Gordon Houser
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Anna Groff
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller
Design: Dee Birkey

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

150 years after Civil War

In reading through the October issue, I have questions and concerns regarding statements in the Stephen Nolt article "150 Years after the U.S. Civil War."

In the portion of the article titled "Mennonites and slavery," Nolt states that few white Americans in the north viewed slavery with the moral clarity of today. He also states that most opponents of slavery were not concerned with the plight of the black slaves but rather with the idea that these slaves were eliminating "economic opportunities" from whites (taking jobs away from whites?).

I find these statements unbelievable. Nolt cites no supporting research for these statements. It would be nice if the magazine required some type of substantiation before publishing articles of historical significance or stating historical facts. Without that, *The Mennonite* will eventually become an 'entertainment' versus a 'learning' magazine.*—Howard Piggee Jr., Fredericksburg, Va.*

In "150 years After U. S. Civil War" (October), Steven M. Nolt observes, "It seems that a handful of Mennonites were involved in the Underground Railroad."

Drawing on family memories, Paton Yoder has reported that my great-grandfather John S. Stoltzfus was banned by the Amish east of Lancaster, Pa., because he worked with the Underground Railroad and campaigned for Lincoln. The ban was evidently a disaster for him and for his family. But after about 10 years, the extended family moved to Tennessee. He was able to go also and in Tennessee was reconciled to the family and the church.

The account appears in Yoder's book *Eine Wurzel: Tennessee John Stoltzfus* (Sutter House, 1979).*—Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

Ill-chosen words on cover

I was quite disturbed by the cover of the September issue. The cover image is a photo of a person of color. Below it, the title reads in large print: "Submission to Servanthood." The article itself was a well-written feature about D.J. McFadden and his work as a Christian medical doctor serving the people of Holmes County, Ohio. I commend you for printing this article and am grateful to God for McFadden and his Christian witness.

But I still can't get over the ill-chosen title. We live in a country where people of African descent were enslaved for generations with no choice but "submission to servanthood." White, brown or black, Jesus calls us to freedom, not slavery (Galatians 5:1). It was clear from the article that McFadden chooses by his own free will to be a Christ-like servant. He does not submit to another person forcing him to be a servant.

We need to be careful of the racial connotations of our religious language. Instead of "submission to servanthood," let's talk about "servant leadership," "discipleship" and "following Jesus."*—Karl Stutzman, Elkhart, Ind.*

The shadow side of a marriage

The letter in the September issue by a person who wrote that "the middle of the gay issue is being silenced" caught my attention. I agree wholeheartedly with "A Compassionate Friend." I am sad, though, that there was a need to withhold the writer's real name for fear of reprisals. I understand the fear of criticism. But by doing that, it continues to push the issues even further into the shadows.

For over 60 years, including our four-year courtship, my husband and I have been one of the "silent middle"—a mixed-sexual-orientation couple. He did not tell me about his strong same-sex attractions until two years after we were married. We just did a good job of pretending to be "normal"—until now.

In recent years we decided to give up the pretense and write a book about our journey together, including the choices needed in order to remain faithful to our sacred marriage vows. *The "Ideal" Couple: the Shadow Side of a Marriage* has recently been published by Cascadia Publishing House. Thus far, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. It seems to have touched a nerve that allows a hurting person to open up and share honestly with others.

I believe giving more attention to the choice of celibacy would be helpful. There is no shame in celibacy. Many singles, widows and widowers choose to channel their sexual energies into productive, meaningful, altruistic activities.—*Marilyn Minter Wolgemuth, North Newton, Kan.*

A resolution on church statements
Everett J. Thomas supported the decision by our church leaders that Pittsburgh 2011 would be a convention with no resolutions on which to vote. However, now our editor calls for us to prepare to vote in 2013 on the most contentious issue of all: to define what conference resolutions mean. Are they "teaching documents" or can they be used "as grounds for discipline"?

Thomas cites *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as a document that was "approved overwhelmingly in 1995." What he does not mention is the fact that this document was clearly presented as a "teaching document" and not a "discipline" document at the General Conference sessions. GC delegates were assured again and again, before we voted, that the confession of faith would not be used to "hit people over the head" or "kick people out."

Our editor now asserts that the differences we have among us about what church statements mean "creates mischief."

I would say that trying to resolve our differences on what church statements mean creates even greater mischief. Certainly entering a contentious two-year process leading up to Phoenix 2013 would be about the most mischievous process imaginable, since it is precisely the question of the meaning of church statements that divides us most sharply.—*Melvin D.Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

According to the October editorial, our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* was overwhelmingly approved in 1995 after many hours of work. Who knows how much money was spent to put it together? What good is having a confession of faith when a Mennonite pastor's credentials were declared in order after performing a same-sex marriage ceremony? Are we reverting back to the day of Judges 21:25, when everyone did what was right in the sight of his own eyes?—*Lloyd W. Gingrich, Mercersburg, Pa.*

Depending on Thomas' definition of "mischief" in the October editorial, Mennonite Church USA diversity of thought about the status of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* is hardly "annoying" or "a practical joke" (common definitions of mischief). Then, in the next sentence, to cast one area conference as an example of "mischief" is grossly hyperbolic and pejorative.

One of the blessings of Mennonite Church USA is its wonderful diversity—both in history, practice and biblical interpretation. The Holy Spirit has blessed this denomination—as many others—with the incredible mandate to give witness to our faith in Jesus Christ, dwell in just and loving relation-

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

Does God in fact have a plan to save the world?" James Krabill asks on page 19. "And if so, does that plan apply to all peoples of the earth, or is it limited in scope, designed and intended only for certain individuals, families, tribes or nations?"

November is Missions Month in Mennonite Church USA. Once again, we invited Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) to provide a theme section that includes not only Krabill's article but the cover story featuring long-time mission worker John Powell (page12).

Mission work has changed in the last 30 years. Stanley Green, MMN executive director, describes these shifts, and says, "Our congregations must expect a different type of accountability than reports on the 'number of souls saved'" (page 34).

Related to this shift is church planting. Keith Harder, director of The Corinthian Plan (health insurance for church workers), explains how TCP helps create new congregations (page 37).

The news section includes a Goshen (Ind.) College release about the death of Jim Miller, biology professor killed during a home invasion on Oct. 9 (page 39).

The news section also brings news about changes coming to *The Mennonite*, including a reduction in the number of pages in each issue from 64 to 56 (page 52).—*Editor*

Kidron Bethel, Schowalter Villa intend to integrate

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The boards of directors of Kidron Bethel Village, North Newton, and Schowalter Villa, Hesston, Kan., have announced their intention to unite operations, effective as early as Jan. 1, 2012.

Both boards approved a resolution Sept. 29 expressing their intention to integrate administrative operations and governance. A final decision will be put before both boards within the next several months. If approved, operation of the two retirement and health-care organizations would be directed by a single management team and board of directors. The combined organization would become the second largest continuing-care retirement community in Kansas.

Discussions by both boards about a possible merger began in December 2010, in response to a continually changing and increasingly challenging health-care environment, including anticipated reductions in Medicare and Medicaid payments.

Both CEOs, Cindy Vanover of Kidron Bethel Village and James Krehbiel of Schowalter Villa anticipate enhanced services would result from the merger. In addition, both campuses would continue to operate at their respective locations, and the names of the two campuses would remain the same.—*Susan Garofalo*

100th member of MWC rooted in ministry to poor

SANTIAGO, Chile—"The magnitude of what has just happened has scarcely sunk in among us," said pastor Samuel Tripainao after the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Chile (IEMCH) was accepted into membership of Mennonite World Conference in May. The approximately 1,200-member conference of 14 congregations is the 100th body—and the first in Chile—to become a member of MWC.

The IEMCH is one of several independent Anabaptist-Mennonite groups in Chile that have come into being mostly as "native" initiatives. With coaching from Jorge Vallejos Sr., an expatriate Chilean church planter in Canada, the IEMCH embraced its Mennonite identity in 1989 and received official government recognition the following year.

The IEMCH churches emerged in poverty-ridden poblaciones (poor sectors in and around Santiago, Chile's capital). They work at relieving poverty, training young people vocationally, battling the drug culture and rehabilitating its victims.

In the early years, IEMCH often felt isolated. But its hunger for a connection to the wider Mennonite world family was awakened by short-term visits from Mennonite teachers and mission administrators, increasing involvement in the biennial gatherings of Mennonites from the Southern Cone (Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile) and the 2009 MWC Assembly 15 in Paraguay.—*Titus Guenther*

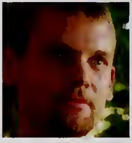
Curtis Denlinger

Stewing up relief

The 45th annual Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale, held Sept. 30-Oct. 1 in Harrisonburg, Va., sold out around 150 gallons of Brunswick stew. Stirring things up are Gene Grove (right) and his son Ronnie Grove of Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.—*Jim Bishop*

Youth ministry worker dies suddenly in Canada

WINNIPEG, Man.—Jeff Warkentin, 32, passed away suddenly on Sept. 24 in Calgary, Alberta, after a brief bout with meningitis.



Warkentin and his wife, Tany, were Mennonite Church Canada ministry workers in Burkina Faso for six years. They completed their assignment in country on June 7 and were busy wrapping up ministry reports and visits to supporting congregations on weekends when Warkentin died. They had resettled in Pincher Creek, Alberta.

During their ministry, they developed a large church and community network in Canada and Burkina Faso. They helped shape and nurture a young congregation of university students in the capital city of Ouagadougou and nurtured leadership for it. Both studied at Canadian Mennonite University (then Canadian Mennonite Bible College) from 1997 to 1999.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Women in Leadership takes volunteers

WHITERIVER, Ariz.—A new volunteer task force made up of women in Mennonite Church USA will work to empower other women leaders. Joanna Shenk, who coordinates the Women in Leadership Audit, will also oversee this project, called the Women in Leadership Taskforce (WLT).

Shenk is associate for interchurch relations and communication for Mennonite Church USA.

The tasks for WLT include these:

- Mennonite Monologues, a collection of stories and publications;
- a women's leadership retreat at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.;

Bluffton University photo

Surround sound: Brass Day at Bluffton University

Jeffrey Boehm (center, back), professor of music at Bluffton (Ohio) University, directs 101 brass musicians from six schools in a rehearsal on the Bluffton music department's Brass Day, Oct. 12. The students, in grades 6-12, represented McComb, Riverdale, Benjamin Logan, Lima Temple Christian, Arcadia and Bluffton schools. They rehearsed together in Yoder Recital Hall before closing the morning-long program with a mini-concert with the Gaudete Brass Quintet, a Midwest-based ensemble, and Bluffton brass players.—*Bluffton University*

- training in undoing patriarchy for leaders in Mennonite Church USA;
- implementation of a mentoring program for women;
- creation of women-empowering resources for worship, work and life.

WLT will meet monthly by phone, with two six-month reviews, then yearly reviews after that, until discontinuation is decided or the task force takes a different form. Each member will begin with a two-year term. The WLT will also work in collaboration with Mennonite Women USA.

For more information, contact Shenk at joannas@mennoniteusa.org or 574-523-3055 or toll-free 866-866-2872 ext. 23055.—*Anna Groff*

Update on victims of Nickel Mines shootings

NICKEL MINES, Pa.—The parents of the victims of the shootings at the West Nickel Mines Amish School on Oct. 2, 2006, have written a statement to thank people for their support.

The statement says that "physically, four of the five girls have recovered to where you cannot see anything wrong; however, one of them still has some significant shoulder issues. ... Rosanna King, the fifth of the surviving girls, has a severe brain injury but has not yet recovered to the extent the others did. She is alert, can see, hear, laugh, cry, recognizes people and knows what is being said. She cannot walk, talk or eat very much, however, just the last five months she has been able to tolerate soft foods in small amounts—otherwise she gets fed with a feeding tube. Communication is challenging. She is training to use an eye gaze communication system."

The Nickel Mines Accountability Committee, comprised of seven Amish men, continues to disburse funds for physical and emotional treatment for the victims and their families. The Committee still accepts donations but is not actively soliciting funds. —*Herman Bontrager*

Boone named PJSN coordinating minister

ELKHART, Ind.—Jason Boone, a Raleigh, N.C., resident with extensive experience in social justice ministries, nonprofit communication and anti-poverty initiatives, has been chosen to lead the Peace and Justice Support Network as coordinating minister.

Boone, who will work out of Raleigh Mennonite Church, began his three-quarter time position on Oct. 10. He builds on the work of recent Peace and Justice Support Network staff members Susan Mark Landis and Tim Huber.

Boone will encourage, support and strengthen Jesus-centered peace and justice commitment and witness in congregations, area conferences, and across Mennonite Church USA. This position is shared among Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board, Mennonite Mission Network, and the Peace and Justice Support Network.

LCC celebrates 20 years

KLAIPEDA, Lithuania—LCC International University marked its 20th anniversary Sept. 21-25. LCC is a Christian liberal arts university that enrolls more than 600 students from 23 countries. The school was founded by invitation of the newly independent Lithuanian government in 1991. Art and Leona DeFehr from Winnipeg, Manitoba, helped found the school and continue to serve on its board.

Steve Dintaman, a worker with Mennonite Mission Network and Virginia Mennonite Missions and chair of the theology department, gave an address entitled "Remember the Past, Forget the Past."—*Steve Dintaman*

Preparing for the long sleep

Ron Adams
is pastor at the
Madison (Wis.)
Mennonite Church.

It's raining. The sky is gray. There's a chill in the air. The trees are turning. Leaves clutter the ground. Fall is coming. Winter isn't far behind.

I love this time of year. Summer will make another visit before lying down to rest. One or two more warm days to tide us over for the months to come. But its ending is apparent. Fall is coming.

Every season has its own beauty. For my part, I find fall to be the most beautiful. There are the leaves, of course, making every tree a bouquet of color. The sun's power is turned down a notch, becoming less hot, less fierce, less judgmental. Softer.

Fall is the season for gathering the last produce from the garden, the last fruit from the tree and stowing them away in canning jars and cupboards, there to last us through the winter. A season for putting away the tools of summer, the lawnmowers and hedge-trimmers, the hoes and clippers, keeping them safe and dry till the next time they are needed. A season for dragging out the cold-weather clothes, brushing them off and putting them in the closet in place of their lighter kin. Fall is the season for stocking up and for taking stock. It is the season when we begin preparing ourselves for death.

Our culture resists death. … It expends its resources on warding off death, postponing it till the very last possible moment. It sees death as a failure.

It seems to me on this cool, wet, end-of-summer day, there is a gift on offer in this season when we prepare ourselves for the dead-time, the long sleep, the fallow period of winter. There is something necessary and worth celebrating in this annual reminder of mortality.

In this season we are given time for all the sorting out, all the preparing required by the coming winter. We are blessed with the time to make plans, to say goodbye, to put away and in other ways make ourselves ready for what is surely coming.

Sure, we can squander the time in denial or procrastination. But we'll be the poorer if we do. There are gifts on offer here, the rare gift of time and the rarer gift of knowing exactly what is coming. We do well to recognize and accept such gifts.

Our culture resists death. It fears death. It considers death something to be overcome or resisted. It expends its resources on warding off death, postponing it until the last possible moment. It sees death as a failure, as wrong, as unacceptable.

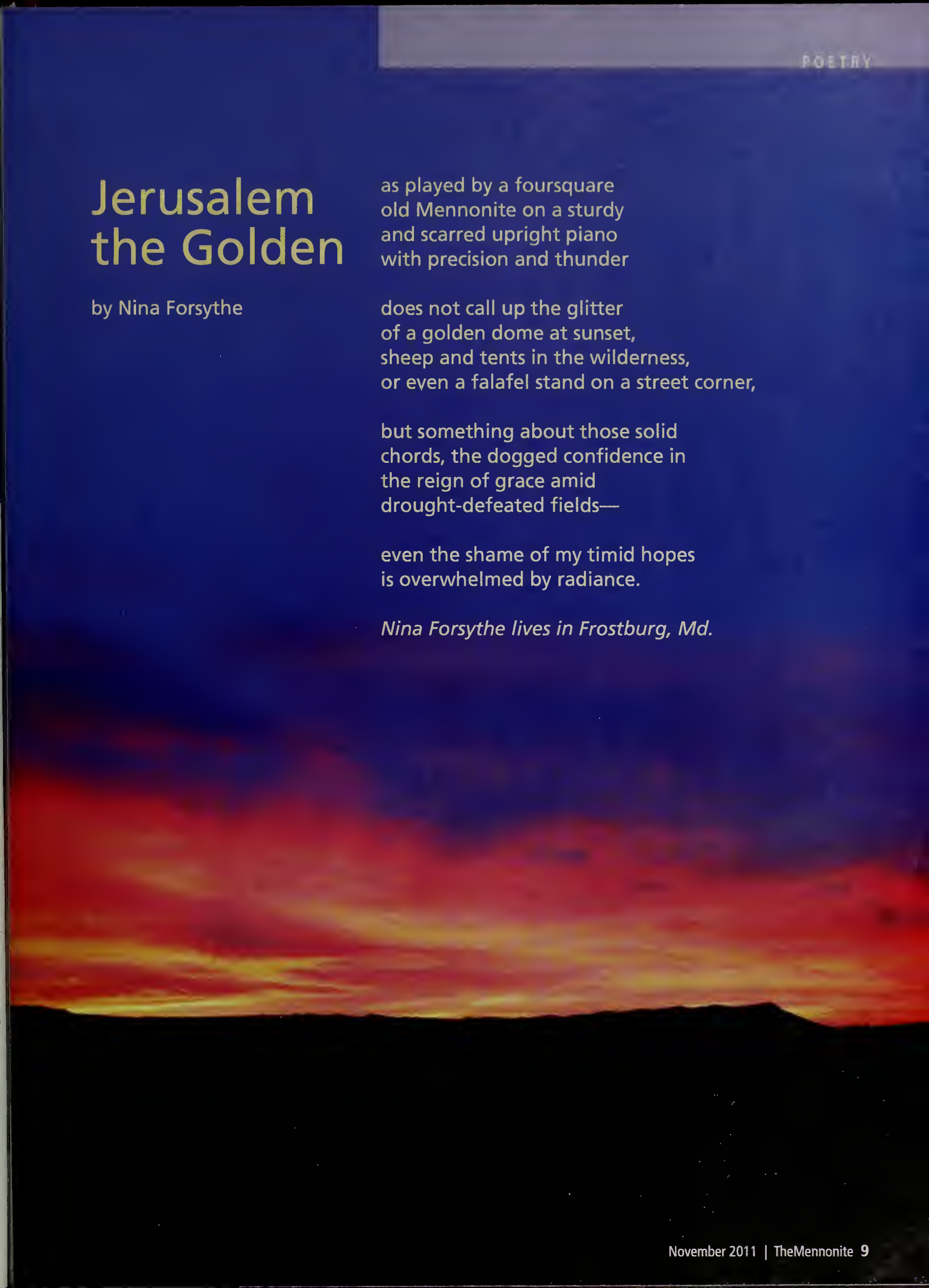
And sometimes death is exactly that. Sometimes death comes too suddenly and too soon. Sometimes death could have been avoided with the proper care and attention. And, even when death does come at just the right time, we still mourn that coming. We still grieve the ending of a cherished life.

But our faith points us away from fear. It shows us what lies on the other side of death. It reveals the true ending of the story, the one in which death no longer speaks last. Our faith reminds us that death has been overcome. It may still claim us all. But its hold has been and will be broken. We will be raised.

Which means we can enter fully into this time of preparation. We can welcome this season of gathering and stowing and getting ready for death. And not just in the mundane details, not just in the material acts of canning, storing and putting our summer clothes away. But also in acts of reflection and contemplation, the spiritual stock-taking that is necessary as we consider our mortality.

What resources will we need to sustain our spirits during the long sleep of winter? What must be gathered together and preserved for the months ahead? What can be, maybe ought to be, put away? How will we avoid simply hunkering down until spring but instead embrace the quiet of the frozen earth and so find God there? What do we hope to leave behind in the grave come spring? What do we hope to see reborn?

Rather than look past this season, I invite us to enter into it gladly. For God is with us even here, in the season that precedes our death. TM



Jerusalem the Golden

by Nina Forsythe

as played by a foursquare
old Mennonite on a sturdy
and scarred upright piano
with precision and thunder

does not call up the glitter
of a golden dome at sunset,
sheep and tents in the wilderness,
or even a falafel stand on a street corner,

but something about those solid
chords, the dogged confidence in
the reign of grace amid
drought-defeated fields—

even the shame of my timid hopes
is overwhelmed by radiance.

Nina Forsythe lives in Frostburg, Md.

We're all connected and therefore all potentially infected

The movie *Contagion*, which opened in theaters in September, tells the story of a deadly virus and the panic that follows when people around the world begin dying from its effects.

While that film tells a fictional story, the risks we all face from emerging infectious diseases are real, writes W. Ian Lipkin in the *New York Times*.

Lipkin, a professor of epidemiology and a professor of neurology and pathology at Columbia University, served as a technical consultant on the film. While films on such subjects tend to sensationalize a pandemic, for example, Lipkin says that *Contagion* portrays real risks that are increasing rapidly. He writes: "More than three-quarters of all emerging infectious diseases originate when microbes jump from wildlife to humans. Our vulnerability to such diseases has been heightened by the growth in international travel and the globalization of food production."

In the film, a woman travels on business to Hong Kong, where she eats meat tainted by contact with a certain animal. The disease spreads via touch and soon affects thousands, killing many.

Lipkin goes on: "In addition, deforestation and urbanization continue to displace wildlife, increasing the probability that wild creatures will come in contact with domesticated animals and humans."

He and a team of other scientists developed a fictitious virus to be used in the film. For inspiration they drew on "the Nipah virus, which in Malaysia in the late 1990s jumped from bats to pigs to humans, causing respiratory disease and encephalitis and resulting in more than 100 deaths before it was contained by quarantine," he writes. In the film, the virus is not contained in time by quarantine, and millions die.

Americans (and perhaps others) tend to ignore warnings about such diseases. Many parents refuse to have their children vaccinated for diseases such as measles. Dr. Paul Offit, chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases and the director of the Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told *Time* Magazine he has seen the consequences: "preventable childhood deaths, community outbreaks of outdated diseases and misinformed, angry parents."

Often people have a mistrust of science and refuse to go along with vaccinations, especially when they're obligated to by the government.

But in communities where this refusal occurs, outbreaks are starting to occur, says Offit. "We saw that with the whooping-cough epidemic in California this past year [2010]. It was the largest in more than 40 years."

Offit goes on to tell this story: "In our hospital this past year, we made flu vaccination mandatory. Some people didn't like that. But we had two children who came into our hospital, both of whom had cancer. They couldn't be vaccinated because of their chemotherapy, caught influenza while in the hospital and died of that disease. Who is responsible? We think we are, so we took a tougher stance, because we don't think it's an inalienable right to transmit a potentially fatal infection to a group of vulnerable, hospitalized children."

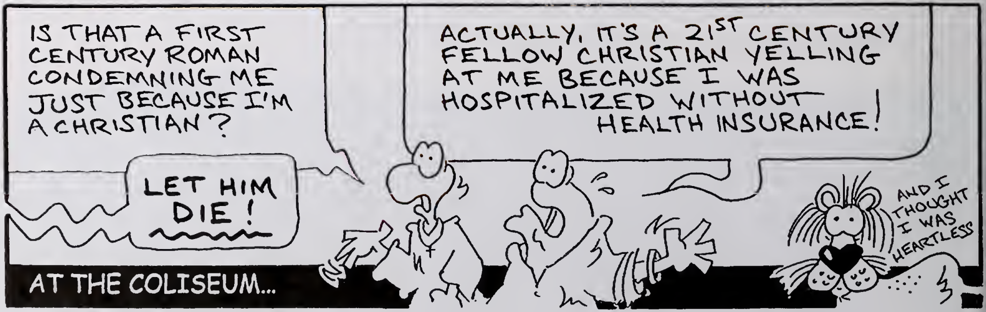
The heroes of *Contagion* are the scientists and public health professionals who put their lives on the line to develop an anti-virus. At the same time, the film does not make these people saints; some make questionable ethical choices.

Lipkin writes that "we need to recognize that our public health system is underfinanced and overwhelmed." Further, "more and better coordination is needed among many local, federal and international agencies."

If we don't attend to these, *Contagion* may be more than just a movie.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

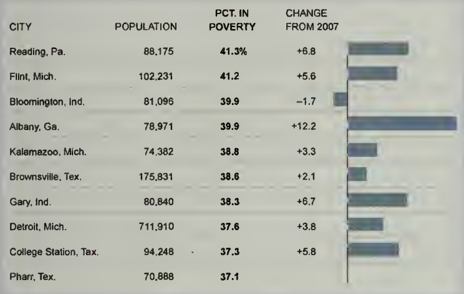
Joel Kauffmann


IS THAT A FIRST CENTURY ROMAN CONDEMNING ME JUST BECAUSE I'M A CHRISTIAN?
ACTUALLY, IT'S A 21ST CENTURY FELLOW CHRISTIAN YELLING AT ME BECAUSE I WAS HOSPITALIZED WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE!
LET HIM DIE!
AND I THOUGHT I WAS HEARTLESS
AT THE COLISEUM...

—compiled by Gordon Houser

> "There are two novels that can change a bookish 14-year-old's life: *The Lord of the Rings* and *Atlas Shrugged*. One is a childish fantasy that often engenders a lifelong obsession with its unbelievable heroes, leading to an emotionally stunted, socially crippled adulthood, unable to deal with the real world. The other, of course, involves orcs." *—Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize-winning economist*

Cities with the highest poverty rates in 2010



CITY	POPULATION	PCT. IN POVERTY	CHANGE FROM 2007
Reading, Pa.	88,175	**41.3%**	+6.8
Flint, Mich.	102,231	**41.2**	+5.6
Bloomington, Ind.	81,096	**39.9**	–1.7
Albany, Ga.	78,971	**39.9**	+12.2
Kalamazoo, Mich.	74,382	**38.8**	+3.3
Brownsville, Tex.	175,831	**38.6**	+2.1
Gary, Ind.	80,840	**38.3**	+6.7
Detroit, Mich.	711,910	**37.6**	+3.8
College Station, Tax.	94,248	**37.3**	+5.8
Pharr, Tex.	70,888	**37.1**	

Sources: Andrew A. Beveridge, Queens College Sociology Department; Census Bureau

Welfare 'reform' not always so helpful

The food stamp program seems to have worked well during the recent recession. The number of recipients has increased by about 30 percent. Welfare, since it was "reformed" in 1996, is another matter, writes Barbara Ehrenreich in her book *Nickel and Dimed*. Getting through the hoops to receive assistance from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families is difficult, and the decisions can be arbitrary. Some recipients have called it the "Torture and Abuse of Needy Families" program. One couple was told that to qualify they must each apply for 40 jobs a week, even though their car was in disrepair and they had no money for gas or babysitting.*—Christian Century*

The value of older workers

Researchers have found that older employees (up to age 65) in a German truck factory were more productive than younger workers. What the older workers lacked in strength and agility they made up for with experience, teamwork and greater problem-solving abilities. They also made more mistakes, but their mistakes were less serious than those made by younger workers.*—The Marketplace*

Numbers to ponder

- Dollars that 93 multinational corporations spent on lobbying for the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004, a year-long "tax holiday": **282.7 million**
- Dollars that corporations saved on taxes as a result of the legislation: **62.5 billion**
- Percentage of Americans who think college is affordable for most people today: **22**
- Percentage of American college presidents who think college is affordable for most people today: **42**
- Percentage of McDonald's job applicants hired as a result of the company's National Hiring Day in April 2011: **6**
- Percentage of applicants accepted to Harvard for the class of 2015: **6**
- Estimated increase, in pounds, in the weight of the average American male, due to a more sedentary work life since 1960: **28**

—Yes! Magazine

Selling Jesus

A newspaper ad that showed a winking Jesus giving a thumbs-up sign to a line of cell phones has been given a thumbs-down by a British government watchdog panel that called it "disrespectful." The Advertising Standards Authority, which governs media advertising, ruled that the phone ads cannot be used again because they appeared to mock Christian values.*—Religion News Service*

10 best places to be a woman

Based on five factors, using a scale of 0-100: justice, health, education, economics and politics

1. Iceland—100
2. Sweden—99.2
3. Canada—96.6
4. Denmark—95.3
5. Finland—92.8
6. Switzerland—91.9
7. Norway—91.3
8. United States—89.8
9. Australia—88.2
10. Netherlands—87.7

—Newsweek

The journey of John Powell, a mission advocate for Mennonite Mission Network

John Powell, who has a long history with Mennonite Mission Network and its predecessor agencies, was named to a new position, mission advocate, on Aug. 1. Powell brings courage, passion and seventy-times-seven forgiveness to his ministry. He inherited some of these qualities; the rest, he says, is a gift of God's grace.

From (missionary) Baptist to missional Anabaptist

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

John Powell walks in ways of peace, though his road has not always been peaceful. Powell remembers his father taking on the Ku Klux Klan—and winning. He also remembers intense anger against the racist structures in the Mennonite Church, which he left in 1974, vowing never to return.

Powell spoke with pride of his father's dignity and daring as he recounted events that took place in 1948. The senior Powell, John Sidney, sold some lumber cut on his farm near Hissop, Ala., to a Klan member who paid with a check calculated to bounce. John Sidney refused to keep quiet about this injustice. When he learned that a pickup of armed Klansmen was headed toward his home, John Sidney sent his 7-year-old son to the safety of a neighbor's house and laid plans.

As the pickup pulled in front of the Powell home, the fraudulent check-writer yelled an obscenity-studded command for John Sidney to present himself. John Sidney did. He stepped out of the door with composure—and two firearms.

One of the Klansmen barked a command to drop the guns, to which John Sidney replied, "You better look around before you go any further."

The noisy bravado of the men in the pickup died into silence as they became aware of their precarious situation. Willie Mae, John Sidney's wife, stood at a window with her rifle trained on one of the Klansmen. Sons and relatives with guns were poised at each window, on the roof and behind trees.

The hush was broken as the pickup sputtered to life and backed off the Powell property. Soon, there was only a cloud of exhaust left to indicate that the Klan had been there. A few days later, John Sidney received full payment for the lumber, in cash.

Martin Luther King Jr., introduces Powell to nonviolent conflict resolution

"I didn't grow up with a pacifist heritage," John Powell says. "It was a slow conversion from violence to nonviolence as I was around people who were practicing peace. I saw a change in people and the mood of the nation when protests were nonviolent."

Powell was in high school when he first spoke with Martin Luther King Jr. Over the next four years, he became a conscientious objector under King's mentoring.

John Powell was born into the church that has been both a haven and a place of wounding for him.

"That was one of the things Martin taught, that you could be affirming of those who are your enemies," Powell says. "He also said if we were COs [conscientious objectors], we needed to connect ourselves to a historic peace church."

Of the peace church options, Powell chose Mennonites because of the voluntary service workers he'd encountered and worked alongside in three Michigan locations. One of these workers, Shirley Hochstedler of Kokomo, Ind., later became Powell's wife and partner in ministry.

"I was attracted to her because of her mind. She and I got into this heated debate about politics," Powell says.

Powell expressed appreciation for Shirley's constant support throughout his various ministries, especially when she was obliged to assume financial support of the family. One of these times was when Powell was fired from an administrative position at University of Michigan. His offense? Spearheading a prayer vigil in front of the university president's home the night before the regents were to vote on ending their investments in corporations doing business in South Africa.

In addition to partnering with her husband, Shirley advocated against hunger-related injustice. She was the national chairperson of the

John Powell (center in dashiki) is at the final meeting of the Minority Ministries Council in Sandia, Texas, where, in 1973, people presented the decision to replace Minority Ministries with an office for Black concerns and a second office for Hispanic concerns. Photo provided

Nestlé boycott that unveiled the suffering and death resulting from the company's promotion of breast milk substitutes. She participated in the 1981 Geneva summit where the United Nations and the World Health Organization began to issue and enforce more responsible guidelines in the sale of infant formula.

Church: Both haven and hell

John Powell was born into the church that has been both a haven and a place of wounding for him. As a child in Alabama, he loved "third Sunday worship" that lasted from 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. (His congregation met only once a month because it shared a pastor with three other congregations.) Even though the members of his Missionary Baptist congregation may have been feeling helpless and tired from 12-hour days of sharecropping and working in the kitchens of white families, they were always singing God's praises, Powell says.

"When I attended the churches of my white friends, they would be singing some of the same good songs my church sang. But when we left, it was a totally different story—we were separated," Powell says. "The same people that were proclaiming God were also cracking heads of black folks. I'm saying, 'Is this a God of justice?' "

In 1968, Powell moved into leadership in the Mennonite Church when he left a good-paying job as a union organizer in the Detroit area to accept a pastorate in Kansas. Powell's salary as a pastor was less than half what he had been earning. The conference to which the congregation belonged showed how little they valued Powell's leadership when they suggested that Shirley, who had recently given birth to the Powells' first child, get a job so the conference could be spared the expense of the pastor's meager salary.

"Granted, I was a little radical. I did not wear a suit and tie. I wore my dashikis [West African traditional garb]. I had the pulpit on the level of the congregation and rearranged the rows of pews so they were facing each other. I also organized a reconciliation center on the site where the Wichita riots had just happened," Powell says.

Powell converted a vacated laundromat into The Brothers' House, a community center where religious leaders could dialogue about race issues.

Powell's ministry in Wichita lasted one year before he was invited to become executive secretary of the Minority Ministries Council in Elkhart, Ind. In this capacity, he worked on a document that suggested concrete ways of empowering Mennonite congregations in African-American, Hispanic and Native American communities. In 1969, Powell presented his proposals at a meeting in Turner, Ore.

"If I thought I had hell before, I had more," Powell says. "A brother got up in the meeting and said, 'If we do what John Powell says to do, the next thing they'll have me out of my pulpit and a nigger in there.' "

After five years of trying to work within the racist structures of the Mennonite Church, Powell was angry and discouraged.

"I left the Mennonite Church declaring clearly that I would never ever return," Powell says.

Evangelized back into the Mennonite Church

However, over the next two decades, as Powell ministered several denominations in the United States and internationally, he made his way, step by step, back to the Mennonite Church he loved so much.

"I was evangelized back into the Mennonite Church," Powell says. "It was brothers and sisters who loved me to death. They invited me to meetings. They listened to me. They became increasingly involved in the struggle for civil rights."

In 1997, Powell accepted a half-time position as director of evangelism and church development with Mennonite Board of Missions, while he continued to teach and provide administration for a ministry training program at Houghton College, a Wesleyan Church institution in western New York. Through the last 16 years, Powell has served in various directorships and other capacities with the mission agency that became Mennonite Mission Network in 2002.

Mission advocate: a resource for conferences

In Powell's most recent job transition to mission advocate three months ago, he helps conferences and congregations think beyond mission paradigms that are no longer effective to discover new strategies for reaching out to their region's specific needs. Powell facilitates discernment sessions that reflect on what kind of leadership and resources are required to bring fresh vitality to Mennonite congregations.

Powell sees that all his previous life and employment experiences, the spiritual and sociological disciplines, converge to equip him for mission advocacy:

- living with and working to overcome racial oppression in both rural and urban areas;
- teaching—from junior high to university;
- social work;
- community organizer;
- educational and state government administration;
- labor union organizing;
- pastoring in three different denominations;
- research in urban and regional planning;
- evangelism;
- twenty years of ministry in Mennonite institutions.

"In my new role, I see myself as being a pastor to congregational leaders, helping them let go in some ways so that the congregation can either flourish or cease to be," Powell says.

One of the methods Powell uses to help people listen to God has two parts—dwelling in God's Word and dwelling in the community.

"It's about listening and thinking how the person is relating to their surroundings and how they are relating to God and being able to help them think about what it really means to be in relationship. Pastoring is helping others discover God's answer," Powell says.

Edwin Kathange (left) guides John Powell through his village of Kijabe, Kenya, while Powell is on a seven-month assignment with National Christian Council of Kenya in 1972.
Photo by Shirley Powell

In his role as mission advocate, after a group has spent time opening up to God's Word, participants disperse two-by-two into their community, using their senses to take in their surroundings. Powell calls this exercise in hearing, seeing, smelling and questioning a spiritual discipline. After observing the community in action for several hours, each twosome records its findings, which are then shared with the whole group. By noticing recurring themes, the group begins to discern what God is already doing in their community.

Mission is about a willingness to be used by God and a commitment to keep listening to God.
—John Powell

"Where are the intersections?" Powell asks. "That's where God is at work."

Mission is about a willingness to be used by God and a commitment to keep listening to God, Powell says.

"We need to keep asking the question, How would my life be different if I was continually pleasing God?" Powell says. "We don't foolishly rush in and assume we are going to help. We let the Spirit move us. It's about showing up and getting out of the way."

Throughout his life, Powell has practiced the ministry of reconciliation he preaches—even to the extent of accepting his Oregon-conference critic as a brother. In Kenya, during a conference that Powell organized to encourage dialogue between African and African-American theologians, he was christened Sebsebe Samantar—the Gatherer and Peacemaker.

Lynda Hollinger-Janzen is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network.

'Tell someone I am here'

By Keith Kingsley

Tito Bordón was second pastor of a Toba United church in La Primavera colony when we arrived in Argentina in 1997, but it was mostly an honorary role for him, since preaching wasn't his gift, and he doesn't read well. In recent years his role in worship is as a dancer, one of many. But he is perhaps the church's most faithful obrero—worker. He always attends the services, and if there is work to be done—chopping firewood for cooking, thatching the roof of the church kitchen, setting up tables for a meal—Tito is in the middle of it.

Left to right, Juan Machagaic, Tito Bordón, Miguel Flores.
Mennonite Mission Network photo

Reflections on 14 years as a mission worker among the Toba in northern Argentina

I mention Tito, though there is nothing I know of that is spectacular about him, unless it is his steady, unassuming meekness. He prays out loud when he rises in the morning and retires at night. He rides his bike to town to cash his small pension check and buy poor cuts of beef to feed his family.

I know of nothing heroic about him, unless it is that, suffering the disgrace of being childless, he and his wife have taken in others' unwanted children to raise as their own. I know of no courageous exploits except his venturing out into the Chaco wilderness to hunt alone or his participation last year in a four-month-long protest on the highway running through his colony, demanding the colony's control of ancestral land. The police came, and two people were killed, but, thank God, not Tito.

I mention Tito because, like many of his fellow Toba believers, he is rooted in his culture, its language and its hunting-gathering customs. He is also grasped by an encounter with God. He delights both in the land, which he cultivates, and solidarity with his people, especially in the communal expressions of "alabanza," the praise of God.

I mention Tito because he exists; he is "here," one of the many Toba believers who live their largely anonymous lives in quiet fidelity—one of the meek who will inherit the earth. I mention Tito so that you will know there is such a man as he and that there is such a people as those to whom he belongs, who are poor in the eyes of the world but rich in faith. He belongs to a people who, as James says, stand to inherit the kingdom promised to those who love God (James 2:5).

For nearly 14 years, Gretchen, my wife, and I have accompanied Toba believers like Tito in northern Argentina. As preparation for this ministry, some 15 years ago, I acquired a book by Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from our own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. But I failed to read it. I took it with me to Argentina, where it sat on my bookshelf until just before we left. When I finally read it, the book troubled me, though not because of its themes, which largely confirmed and nourished my Anabaptist faith.

Written nearly 30 years ago by a Peruvian priest, its point continues to be an important one, that the emerging spirituality among the poor of Latin America is life giving because they are "drinking from their own wells." Furthermore, the author contends that this new spiritual dynamic holds out life, salvation even, to those of us who drink from other wells, other spiritual traditions.

The book troubled me because it made me reflect on our years of living and working among some of the poor of Latin America. Has indigenous spirituality indeed brought about liberation of the poor and conversion of the powerful? And have I had the sensitivity to perceive this spirituality, the vulnerability to enter into it, experience it and be converted—and saved—by it? Reading this book at the end of our missionary career has served to raise questions that anyone might face at the end of a career: What's the significance of what I've done? How am I to characterize our years of ministry, its ups and downs, my own achievements and failures? What am I to say to others?

What I can do with integrity and passion is testify: tell about what we have heard and seen and touched in the course of our sojourn. A brief story by Eduardo Galeano, a Uruguayan writer, exhorts me to do just that.

He tells of Fernando Silva, director of a children's hospital in Managua, Nicaragua. Working late one Christmas Eve, he was approached by a small boy he knew to be dying and who was completely alone in the hospital.

As the boy approached him, he reached out his hand to take Fernando's: "Tell someone," he whispered; "tell someone that I am here."

I mention Tito so you know he is here.

Keith and Gretchen Kingsley served with Mennonite Mission Network among the Toba people for 14 years.

Liberato Méndez, Toba pastor, and Keith Kingsley. Mennonite Mission Network photo

On timidity and treason

By James R. Krabill

Mission for every member of the church

This year at its biennial gathering in Pittsburgh, the delegates of Mennonite Church USA adopted a vision to "move more deliberately toward fulfillment of our missional purpose as a church."

The call to bear witness to God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ is not limited to "a select few who are specially commissioned and set apart for God's work," the delegates affirmed. It is the responsibility of "every member of every congregation."

It is a bit rare and in fact daunting for an entire denominational body to make this kind of sweeping commitment to deepened missional engagement. It will furthermore be a challenging task in the context of a broader society where increasing numbers of people are questioning the importance and appropriateness of inviting those of other religions to faith in Christ.

So where are we as a church on "the mission question"? It is a conversation we need to have. And when we do, we will discover other questions that will challenge us to reexamine not only our mission commitments but the foundational tenets of the Christian faith itself.

This reality became clear to me several years ago when I conducted a survey with a group of 37 mostly Mennonite university students to identify questions they had about mission. In 20 minutes of small group discussion, 144 questions surfaced. Many of these appeared multiple times. Still, no fewer than 63 distinct issues emerged.

I have repeated this exercise in other settings and harvested an even wider range of questions: What is so unique about Christianity anyway? How can we be sure all paths to God aren't the same? What happens to people who have never heard of Jesus? Who are we to say what is right and wrong? And the list goes on and on.

When we choose to take on the issue of mission, an accompanying cluster of other intersecting questions will require our attention. They include the following:

1. God. Does God in fact have a plan to save the world? And if so, does that plan apply to all peoples of the earth, or is it limited in scope, designed and intended only for certain individuals, families, tribes or nations?

2. Jesus. What role does Jesus play in God's plan? Is Jesus who and what he claimed to be? Did he say what he meant? And did he mean what he said? Is he simply "one among the many"? Or is he in fact "the One among many"?

3. Scriptures. Is the biblical text a trustworthy source for our understanding of God's saving plan? Or have science, the Jesus Seminar and *The Da Vinci Code* destroyed its reliability? And what about the Qur'an, the Gospel of Judas, Native American spiritual sources and our own life experiences? How does the Bible stand up to these?

When we choose to take on the issue of mission, an accompanying cluster of other intersecting questions will require our attention.

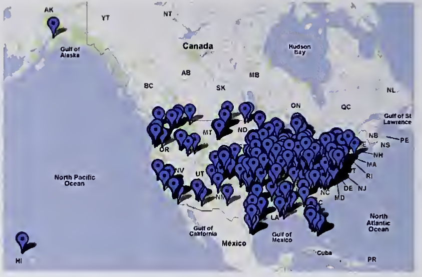
4. Church. Wouldn't it be better if the church simply faced head-on its own internal conflicts and brokenness and cleaned up its act before proclaiming "good news" to others? Shouldn't the church be a model of the gospel before attempting to be its messenger?

5. History. What about all the horrible things—Crusades, slavery, colonialism, racism—that have been done in the name of Christianity over so many years? Aren't these reasons enough for the church to take a break from mission for a while?

6. Culture. Are there respectful ways for the church to approach people of other faiths and cultures? And if so, why do so many Christians have bad reputations as culture-bashers, imposing their faith on people through manipulation and coercion?

7. Global faith family. What will happen to the church and its mission as the center of gravity for the Christian family moves south? What new issues and challenges will the global church face? How will it feel for Christians in the West to live in a world where the majority of missionaries are Africans, Asians and Latin Americans, a world where the West is considered "a vast mission field" in desperate need of the gospel?

We at the Mission Network take these questions seriously. But even as we do, we continue to affirm a certain number of core convictions. We believe that mission is:



www.mennoniteusa.org | Google map "MC USA Congregations"

The challenge before us is not for the mission agency alone but for the entire body of Christ.

- **God initiated.** God is first and foremost a missionary God with a cosmic peace plan to set things right with our broken, violent and sinful world.
- **Christ centered.** Jesus the Messiah is the means, the messenger and the model of that plan.
- **Scripture inspired.** The Bible is a God-breathed, trustworthy account of God's passionate love for the world and of God's people, chosen and Spirit-empowered by God to be "a light to the nations." This story begins with the call and promise to Abraham and Sarah and finds fruition in the body of believers who gather around Jesus. It is a story centuries long in the making and has been passed down to us for our instruction on how to live faithfully as God's missional people in our time and place.
- **Church based.** The body of Christ, despite its failures and imperfections, remains the principle instrument through which the "practice" and "proclamation" of God's saving plan in Jesus are made known to the world.
- **Jesus styled.** Living faithfully as God's missional people means doing mission the way Jesus did it, rejecting all forms of coercion and cultural cloning, and instead commending to all who will listen the liberating, life-transforming thing God is doing by breaking on to the human scene, becoming flesh and blood and "moving into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, *The Message*).
- **Partner driven.** We are not lone rangers in this calling but partners with sisters and brothers in our own communities, throughout the church at congregational and district conference levels and with believers around the world as the good news of Jesus becomes known and embraced by new people in new places.
- **Globally engaged.** For us at the Mission Network this has meant enthusiastic participation in the Global Mission Fellowship of Mennonite World Conference as we explore together with scores of other Anabaptist-related churches and mission groups worldwide how to cultivate mutuality, share resources, empower local initiatives and create new alliances for our common missional calling as God's people. In the process, we are learning new roles as we move from parent to partner, from lecturer to learner, from resource to recipient, from founder to friend.

We will not as a church achieve clarity and agreement on all aspects of "the mission question" overnight. It will take hard work, renewed focus and disciplined intentionality around a new set of priorities. But each day of creative reflection and faithful obedience will bring us closer to the central affirmations that have given life and sustenance to followers of Jesus from the earliest era of the Christian movement to the present day.

The challenge before us is not for the mission agency alone but for the entire body of Christ—all congregations, all district conferences, all camps and schools, all members of Mennonite Church USA—as we seek together to "move more deliberately toward fulfillment of our missional purpose as a church."

Mennonites at various points in our history have proven remarkably timid in bearing witness to God's cosmic peace plan to "reconcile all things to himself in Christ" (Colossians 1:20).

Lesslie Newbigin, lifelong mission worker and former bishop in the Church of South India, calls us to a higher level of reflection and involvement when he writes: "If, in fact, it is true that Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of all that exists in heaven or on earth, has—at a known time and place in human history—so humbled himself as to become part of our sinful humanity and to suffer and die a shameful death to take away our sin and to rise from the dead as the first fruit of a new creation; if this is a fact, then to affirm it is not arrogance. To remain quiet about it is treason to our fellow human beings."

James R. Krabill is senior executive for Global Ministries for Mennonite Mission Network.

Mennonite youth at Pittsburgh 2011 heard that now is the time for them to make a mature decision and request baptism upon their return to their home congregations after convention. "Don't wait for a perfect moment," said speaker Brenda Matthews on July 8. "Life is not perfect." While most can agree there is no "perfect" time, is there an ideal time for an adult believer's baptism? How do congregations encourage baptism among young people and new members—and at what age? ▶

Our practice of baptism

By Anna Groff

The typical age of baptism and how we respond to infant baptism has changed over the years.

Age 13 and 14 is the average age for baptism at Lindale Mennonite Church in Linville, Va., says pastor Duane Yoder. While many individuals receive Jesus into their lives before baptism, says Yoder, "baptism is a public declaration that says, 'I am making an adult decision before this body.' "

To Yoder, ages 12 and 13 seems young for baptism. "[Those ages are] at the bottom edge of something we could call an adult decision," he says.

"It's difficult to talk about committing yourself to the Lord if you haven't come up against some adult issues," he says. He names mature thoughts, puberty, sexuality and adult relationships as some examples.

Yoder grew up in a Mennonite church where the baptism instruction class seemed mandated, and he felt strong pressure to move forward with baptism after the class. He chose baptism at age 14 but says he came to an authentic faith several years later.

Those experiences inform his position that he will only baptize individuals that choose to join the baptismal instruction class for themselves. Those individuals also must articulate their testimony to the church.

In more than 30 years of pastoral ministry, Yoder has only occasionally experienced some pressure from parents to baptize their younger children with the hope that baptism will prevent teenage rebellion.

"I never found that to be the case," he says with a laugh.

People are really owning their faith, taking it seriously and not just saying the right words to get through the sequence with everyone else.
—Heidi Regier Kreider

Photo: Dee Birkey

Am I ready for baptism?

Both Yoder and Heidi Regier Kreider, pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., spoke of young adult and older adults choosing baptism, as well as some youth waiting until they are older.

"People are really owning their faith, taking it seriously and not just saying the right words to get through the sequence with everyone else," she says. "This challenges the whole church to take their baptism more seriously and not just go through the motions."

Churches with more members new to Mennonite Church USA may have a higher average age for baptism.

Jon Brown of Church Without Walls in Elkhart, Ind., says the average age at his church is 25. However, his congregation baptizes youth and young adults who understand baptism's significance and then the church walks with them on their faith journey.

"Most, if not all the members of our congregation, are from an urban setting and were not raised in the Mennonite church," Brown says.

John Rempel of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart describes a common pattern found mostly in traditional Anglo Mennonite churches in which church leaders encourage early teenagers who express love for Jesus to join some kind of instruction class. At the end of that class, the individuals decide whether or not to move forward with baptism. Baptism remains separated by time from an initial declaration of faith.

Speaking out of 14 years of experience in New York City, Rempel says he observes a different trend in many African-American and Hispanic churches, where baptism follows soon after one becomes a Christian.

Samuel Lopez, pastor of New Holland (Pa.) Spanish Mennonite Church, says that baptism follows as a separate event for many Hispanic individuals due to the fact that a majority grew up in the Catholic Church and experienced baptism as infants.

"It is a strong practice in the Hispanic Mennonite congregations to teach the new believers about baptism and in that context they share about church membership," he says. "We value very much adult baptism as a sign of commitment to Christ and the local church."

As far as the average age of baptism, Rempel says that 40 years ago, the former Mennonite Church custom was to baptize children as young as 11 and 12, while in the General Conference tradition, the age tended to be older.

Now, Rempel observes late high school as the average age of baptism in Mennonite Church USA churches from both backgrounds.

Regier Kreider says the average age at Bethel College Mennonite is around 16. While Lopez observes the baptism of many Hispanic adults, he says that the average age of baptism in Hispanic churches remains around 12 or 13.

"I recently baptized nine people in Trenton, N.J. Seven of them were young people, about the age of 17," Lopez says.

Another shift Rempel sees is the connection between baptism and church membership—which remains stronger now than 20 years ago—when some congregations baptized individuals without encouraging them to join the local church as a member.

"Conservative and liberal people reacted against that," he says. "I have the sense that the two are more connected now."

This is the case for Yoder's, Lopez' and Regier Kreider's churches, which associate baptism with church membership.

"Not that they are the same thing, but baptism is the sign of accepting God's grace and choosing to follow Jesus, and that is expressed in a community of believers," Regier Kreider says.

On the Sunday of baptism, most Mennonite churches ask individuals to give a faith testimony (either written or oral) to the congregation. Regier Kreider's church prints the faith statement in the bulletin on the Sunday of the baptism after the pastors and deacons process the statement.

2009 TM photo contest entry | Tim Manickam

It is a strong practice in the Hispanic Mennonite congregations to teach the new believers about baptism and in that context they share about church membership.—Samuel Lopez

Rempel describes two hopes he has for Mennonite Church USA regarding baptism. First he names the testimony before baptism.

"I'm thrilled by someone who maybe doesn't have all the questions answered but can see that Christ is a living part of their life," Rempel says. "At the same time, I am saddened by generic comments about becoming a part of a community or about God."

He says he hopes for clearer, more joyful statements such as, "Christ is the center point of my life" or, "He's found me." ▶

> We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin. Baptism is also a pledge before the church of their covenant with God to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers are baptized into Christ and his body by the Spirit, water, and blood.—*Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*

Second, Rempel encourages Mennonites to include the date of an individual's baptism in his or her obituary or in a tribute at a funeral.

"When you read an obituary, the things that are named are often achievements in our everyday life," he says, "I appeal to people to give appropriate prominence to the spiritual claims, including the time of baptism of the loved one."

Mennonites and infant baptism

Mennonite churches also welcome adults coming from other denominations more than in the past, says Rempel. Even if these adults were baptized as infants, more and more churches accept them if they offer a personal confession of faith.

The traditional stance was that people had to get baptized again, but that remains less the case now, he says. At the same time, many Mennonite congregations remain clear that believer's baptism is normative.

Lindale and Bethel College churches accept members from other denominations who were baptized as infants but reaffirm their faith. Regier Kreider remembers a Lutheran couple at her former Mennonite congregation who both said their baptism remained alive in their current faith, but the wanted to join the church.

"It would have been artificial for them to be rebaptized," she says.

Yoder offers a similar viewpoint. "To [require rebaptism] is saying that someone else's tradition is invalid," Yoder says. "I don't think we want to posture ourselves as saying our tradition is the only valid one."

Early Anabaptists were more concerned with the separation between church and state and less about baptism, says Yoder.

Also, infant baptism functions less like it did in the past, when denominations were indiscriminate and baptized whole groups of people.

"Now many churches will only do so if one parent is an active Christian," Rempel says. While it's not an adult baptism, many infant baptism practices have evolved over centuries.

Anna Groff is associate editor of The Mennonite. *Baptism is the theme of the fall issue of* Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. *To order, write IMS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart IN 46517-1999; bngingerich@ambs.edu.*

Responses on *The Mennonite*'s Facebook page

What age were you baptized? Do you believe you were too old, too young or just right at the time of your decision and why? (For more responses, go to www.themennonite.org.)

Greg Sala: I was 14. I believe I was ready at the time.

Donna Merillat Heatwole: I was 14, in a large General Conference church. All of the 14-year-olds were baptized. Who would dare to say no? The pressure was too great. ... Too young.

Jane Bishop Halteman: I was 12—got baptized after making a "decision" at Laurelville Mennonite Camp. Too young but no harm done, I suppose, as I continue to grow (even at 65) into what it means to be baptized.

Sam Steiner: I was baptized when I was about 10 or 11 at the North Lima Mennonite Church. It was an immature baptism; I got rebaptized at Rockway Mennonite Church in Ontario when I was about 28.

Judith Vargo: I was about 40. I wish I had been baptized 10 years before, when I first came to faith in Christ, because my baptism had a big impact on my faith life. I felt like I was finally part of the family of Christ.

Conrad Martin: I was 11. I didn't understand everything that it meant at the time, so I would separate the baptism of new believers from the act of becoming a member of a church—maybe make membership a two-tiered process.

Patricia Hershberger: I was 8 years old. I have pondered this "right age" question for a long time. My decision and my baptism were real for me then and have continued to be real for me through the years. I want children affirmed with their decisions to follow Jesus, but I wonder about church membership in this way, even in light of how we've understood baptized into one body.

Alma Perez Ovalle: I was 13. I was baptized in the Nueces River by my Dad, pastor of a South Central Conference Spanish Mennonite church in Robstown, Texas. Good age.

Robert Martz: I was rebaptized at 30. First was baptized as an infant in the Lutheran church.

Jake Short: I was 18, rather late for my congregation. I wish I would have waited until some time in university, or possibly even afterward, since a few years made a huge difference in my spiritual maturity. But then again, the Quaker influence on me has a tendency to reject baptism as necessary.

Wilma Ressler Cender: I was 12 when I was baptized in the Mennonite church. I was not pushed into it, however. It was something I decided on my own to do and wanted to. I do not regret being baptized at that age. I do wonder, however, if the younger ages are ready for the responsibilities of membership. I go back and forth myself on what is the best way for the baptism/membership combination.

Susan Sommer: Eighth grade, felt absolutely right at the time. Later, I thought maybe I had been too young. Now (I'm 64) I think I knew what I was doing. I give credit to what I knew as a young teen.

A baptism testimony

By Stephanie Hollenberg

I was 15 the summer of the Mennonite Youth Convention in Charlotte, N.C., and during that week I had an encounter with Phil, a friend of mine. He had been struggling with some things, and after listening to Phil's grief, I went away ebullient, thinking, God, I want to do more of this. Although I had been baptized as an infant, I decided then that I wanted to be baptized again.

Seven years have passed—seven years of discovering God, then losing God as my faith crumbled, disenchanted and repulsed by the church, as I've struggled to rebuild an authentic and meaningful faith, as I've sought a language that resonates with my faith, as I've learned (and relearned) to un-numb and enter into awareness of the ever-present Divine.

Four years ago, in my high school senior faith statement, I said I wasn't sure I wanted to be a Christian, but a few months later I chose Christianity and the faith community surrounding it. Knowing spirituality is an integral part of who I am, I knew I needed some faith tradition and didn't want to start from square one with an unfamiliar one, and I couldn't deny how Christian values and stories had woven themselves into my life, so I chose to delve deeper into the faith tradition I was given.

Although I chose Christianity at that time, I hadn't yet sorted out how Jesus fit in or what Jesus meant to me. The "Savior" and "Son of God" language used to describe and name Jesus repelled me. Yet the values in Jesus' teachings captured me. Seeing how boldly Jesus lived to show that bringing justice, grace, love and peace to the broken, marginalized and untouchables in society was more important than fearing death.

The core of my faith since I was 13 has been to love so intensely. I've found expression of this love in listening, one of the beloved partners of love. As I affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted deeper than all that is wrong, listening to others different from me is essential—learning from them and delighting in them, affirming and sympathizing with them, offering them a space to be authentic and vulnerable.

This summer, during 10 days at the Taizé community in France, something shifted. At evening prayer, the brothers leave their space and bring a cross with a black Jesus to a space where people are invited to kneel before it and pray.

I've had many teachers and mentors, but Jesus has never been among them. But as I knelt at the feet of this black Jesus, something in me opened, and I chose Jesus as my mentor, teacher and Lord. I choose to sit at the feet of Jesus, as Mary did, to learn from his radical compassion, love, grace and wisdom. And I commit to seeking a vocation that will serve the needs of the world and further the kingdom of God as Jesus envisioned it.

Near the end of high school I was vocal about my questions and frustrations with the church, but after an intense two years of grappling with those things, I quieted. I was weary of the dissonance I felt. I've learned to trust my voice again, to speak from my core of wisdom and intuition society doesn't always validate or want to hear.

Seven years later, I stand before you, ready to be baptized—with integrity. The church is "the love that will not let me go." You have surrounded and held me, nurtured and loved me. Thank you—and know that I look to you for continued guidance and support as I venture into whatever life will bring me, and I publicly enter this community to work and worship among you as a person of faith, committing to use my gifts and my voice to serve the church and participate in church life.

College Mennonite Church pastoral team members Daniel (left) and Talashia Keim Yoder baptize Stephanie Hollenberg on Sept. 11 in the Goshen, Ind., dam pond. Photo by Don Rheinheimer

Stephanie Hollenberg is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

Apologies help bring inner unity and reconciliation.

The power of apology

By Ted Lewis

"I'm sorry for my part in this whole thing," he said. It was already a good two hours into the group dialogue, and no one was expecting him to offer an apology. But once it was out there, everything shifted. The mood lightened up, others shared more openly and the conversation moved freely toward future considerations.

It wasn't the first time I had facilitated such a meeting in a church setting. On previous occasions I have witnessed this same kind of release point. But each time it happens, I'm struck anew by the profound power of a genuine apology. Whenever someone can own his or her responsibility for hurting others or for contributing to the rise of tensions, it seems to do good for all involved.

So basic to human life is the spoken apology that it holds status as one of the three most important things we remind little children to say. "Say, Thank you." "Say, Please." "Say you're sorry." We want our children to internalize these courtesies on their own by the time they're 10. My mother had to coach me until I was in high school to say thank you.

Significantly, these essentials all have to do with relationships. We socialize children into gratitude, respect and ownership because we are relational beings. And this socialization is good because it engages the deepest ways we approach life and even God. Think of the Psalms. One can almost boil them down to thanking God, asking God for help and admitting to God our limits and failures.

In light of how apologies touch the deeper parts of our lives with others and prompt our inner growth, I have found it stimulating to think about how apologies work. But giving an apology can be complicated. When do you give one? And how do you give one, knowing that some apologies can mess things up even more?

These questions are common, largely because the terrain of apology and forgiveness is often filled with gray tones. When two sides in a conflict feel as though the other side has slighted their integrity, the complexities increase. Unresolved conflicts, for many, have paralyzed them from being able to say sorry on any occasion. The power of apology gives us more confidence about applying it in our daily lives and in our churches.

One would think the words "apology" or "sorry" are in the Bible, but they aren't. We do read about forgiveness, and I'll return to that. The Greek word "apologia," however, is in the New Testament, meaning "to make a defense for yourself" (as Paul did in his final speeches in Acts). How ironic that centuries later (around the 18th century), the concept of apology would apply to making yourself more vulnerable, through confession, rather than defending yourself!

Word meanings and usages change over time. Some people say sorry for countless situations in a given day: "I'm sorry, could you repeat that." "Oops, sorry." I will limit the use to occasions when we have truly done something to impact another person, causing us to think about saying "I'm sorry" before we do so.

Causing us to "think"—there's a defining feature. It is apologies we most resist giving that are the most profound. I hate giving apologies. My Adam's apple extends, and for that reason we speak of "swallowing our pride." One time I vented my frustrations with a sharp tongue onto a librarian who informed me of additional fees regarding a book my daughter had lost. Nothing pushes my buttons more than paying fines or fees that seem unfair.

Ten minutes later, at a grocery store, my thinking kicked in. The only honorable thing to do was to go back and apologize. When she saw me in line again, she surely thought, Oh no. Not him. She braced herself when I approached. "I came back to apologize to you. You didn't deserve the negative stuff I dished out, and I'm really sorry for affecting you." At first she looked at me with disbelief. Then she extended her hand toward me. "Thank you," she said slowly and sincerely. "No one has ever done that before."

We socialize children into gratitude, respect and ownership because we are relational beings.

It was a great reconciling moment. It released both of us from the tension I had caused. But greater was the fact that a relationship grew where there would otherwise have been no relationship—or rather, a negative relationship. In future visits to the library, I would have avoided her at all costs; should our eyes have met under that scenario, old tensions would have gripped us both. Our feelings would have been ruled by the unnamed harm of the past. But as it happened, the apology opened up a freer future. In subsequent correspondence she wrote, "True conflict resolution strengthens a relationship and often forges friendships, as it did with us."

In my restorative justice work with victims and offenders, I've had the chance not only to hear apologies but to read them. After reviewing over 100 letters, I saw categories of phrases that corresponded with past, present and future:

1. statements of admission (for wrongdoing in the past);

2. statements of expression (of regret and empathy in the present);

3. statements of intention (for change and reconciliation in the future).

For example, letters typically begin with "I did such and such; I didn't think ..." (past tense), then, "I am sorry; I feel bad that ..." (present tense) and, finally, "I will not repeat ...; I hope we can ..." (future tense). This framing helped me realize that a good apology helps both givers and receivers to successfully pivot from the past to the future.

One time I facilitated a case with a teenager who vandalized some outdoor church property. After preparation meetings, I told the victim party that the boy might not be very apologetic but was willing to meet. During his prep meeting, he even said he didn't want to meet. The joint dialogue had its limits, but in the end there was a mutual reparation plan. Before we left, one church member asked the boy if the meeting was helpful to him. He said, "I don't feel so separate now."

Churches are all too often places where apologies run low and mistrust runs high.

This line reminds me that sincere apologies create unities where there were disunities. Certainly they unify people relationally, as the library story demonstrates. But they also unify something inside people. If I make a hurtful remark to my wife, the disconnection between us is paralleled by a disconnection between the part of me that mindlessly acts and the part of me that mindfully affirms higher standards. In that gap we experience a type of shame Paul calls "godly sorrow," a motivator for "repentance ... (which) leaves no regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10). There is also a crippling type of shame that holds us captive to the past, and Paul says it "brings death."

An apology, therefore, brings a sense of relief because it restores that inner unity. I think of apologies as a miniature death. Our lower-self pride dies, and our higher-self humility, which chose a sacrificial death for the sake of the other, brings resurrection life for receiver and giver. The result: unity, reconciliation, atonement (literally, being at-one with another).

Of all people, church folk should understand this death-unto-life pattern that is so foundational to Christianity. And yet churches are all too often places where apologies run low and mistrust runs high. If, however, people can "bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances (they) have with one another" (Colossians 3:13), then apologies can run freely. Reading the Epistles through the lens of church relationships helps us see how we work out our salvation in the context of "one another-ing." Thus we participate in the Christ-pattern by practicing the Christ-virtues (humility, compassion, forgiveness). And practice makes perfect.

Who takes the first step? No easy answer there, except to say that love initiates a way. Certainly, apologies and forgiveness are at their best when they are exchanged at the same time. But they should never be tied together with strings. They operate on their own independent terms because in a gray-tone world, different people progress at different paces. Forgiveness is a journey for the one wronged; apology is a journey for the one who wronged. While both are defined by a strained relationship, they are not dependent on what the other person does or doesn't do.

In a word, these powerful gifts are invitational. I once heard a police officer tell a citizen that he was sorry for how he handled a traffic citation. He didn't have to apologize in a setting of confidential mediation. But he invitationally offered it. It was moving, for this sort of thing is rare in law enforcement cultures. But it was empowering for both the officer and the citizen. The result: a profound strengthening of community relations.

Do you wish to promote new life? Are you willing to model Jesus' vulnerability through honesty about your contribution to existing tensions or strife? According to the New Testament, the road goes through the miniature Jerusalems of our lives, those places of power that resist change and growth. Thankfully, the very place where our pride dies is the place where new life rises up with power to ensure a new and better future for everyone.

Ted Lewis lives in Rice Lake, Wis., where he directs Barron County Restorative Justice Programs. Previously he provided mediation services for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference.

The holiday experience is different in Palestine, compared with the United States.

Thanksgiving

a prime rib dinner and no burning trees

By Cat Rabenstine

Last year wasn't my first Thanksgiving abroad, a holiday that is oh-so-North American that celebrations overseas usually take on a little local flavor.

www.sxc.hu.com

Home, no matter where you are, is a place of rejuvenation and encouragement, solace and stability, family and peace.

In Kerala, India, we were treated to curried barbecue chicken and the most delicious mashed potatoes I may ever taste. I wore a navy blue churidar to that meal. In Dublin, our Irish hosts had a special meal cooked up for our group of college students on a social justice study trip. We arrived after dark and left patches of snow on the carpeted stairs as we tromped up to the second floor, where we ate family style. In Rome, I wore chic black and ate Chinese food at a restaurant in Monte Mario. Each time the food was warm and delicious and I felt thankful to be among friends thoughtful enough to make Thanksgiving part of their week.

Last year I celebrated Thanksgiving with hummus and pita in Bethlehem, Palestine, while my mother and younger brother made prime rib and Yorkshire pudding in Madison, Wis. They probably talked about his latest rugby game and her projects at work and their upcoming trip to the Holy Land for Christmas. Pete fixed a few things in the house and carried the water softener salt to the basement, while Mom set the table with festive placemats and a bouquet of enormous sunflowers. It probably smelled like slowly cooking meat, and the house felt warm and cozy, at least in the rooms where Mom didn't close the vents to save energy. Van Morrison probably crooned on speakers throughout the house. They might have remembered little Briggs, the ancient cat who blessed my family with her tiny presence from my childhood into my young adulthood. Though her little legs were atrophied in old age, she continued to launch herself with reckless abandon over sofas and between our legs, and proceed to sleep for hours with the same reckless abandon that got her to her latest perch.

Thanksgiving, even more than Christmas, is a time when going home is about just that—going home. There aren't gifts or mad shopping sprees to make you sweat with pressure. It's a time to cook extravagantly and eat Americanly, then sleep with the reckless abandon only possible during a long weekend.

Once I left home for college, returning home made me conscious of what it felt like to be home, something I had taken for granted when I was always there. I realized it smelled like detergent and wood and a constantly brewing pot of Red Rose tea. Mom made up my bedroom with clean sheets, often placing a small vase of fresh flowers on my nightstand. I returned to school realizing that no, I wasn't actually Buddhist, and the guy I was dating was a materialistic yahoo and that I should take an afternoon and go to the art institute to absorb inspiration and realize my vast potential.

Home, no matter where you are, is a place of rejuvenation and encouragement, solace and stability, family and peace. When I asked friends what home means for them, whether American or Palestinian, their responses were fed with the same nourishing sentiments:

"Home is safe, caring, giving and can be anywhere as long as it's a place where one can feel alive."

"A place to be carefree without worries. Being with family. The only door that is always open when other doors are closed. Home is a place where one finds peace, solitude, serenity, tranquility and enjoys his time regardless of how trivial his lifestyle is, he still finds it to be sublime."

"Home equals warmth, love and encouragement. It's where you can just be you."

Home is hardly ever about the actual structure; it's about the feelings you have when you are there. That is, until the structure itself is at risk.

My apartment in the West Bank is within spitting distance of The Wall, near Rachel's Tomb. When I look out my bedroom window, I see it wrapping around the other side of my building, up the hill next to Aida Refugee Camp. Heavy cement blocks soar up to 25 feet tall with metal fencing on top, the kind that protects innocent outsiders from dangerous prisoners inside. I have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a huge kitchen and a living room that seats nine because the family that used to live here moved out when The Wall was built. Their store failed because the street was difficult for shoppers to access, and their view was suddenly demoralizing rather than breathtaking.

Fear and resignation are emotions I don't relate to when I think of my home, but for some of my Palestinian friends this is their reality at home.

Once I was invited to dinner during Ramadan at a friend's house in a village called Sarra, situated near Nablus on the top of a hill and surrounded by Israeli settlements on all sides. As we walked through the village, my friend expressed pride in the beauty of her neighborhood. She pointed to her house from far away, "That is my home."

The house was gorgeous, with a special room for the eldest daughter to teach English to kids in the village. The three daughters shared a pink bedroom. Her father, a taxi driver, came home just for dinner, then returned to work until nearly midnight. He cracked jokes, and his daughters poked fun at him during dinner. He fed his wife a piece of bread with a look of admiration and adoration on his face. He made the best of the few minutes he had with his loved ones, relaxing in the home he created with them.

We sat on their porch to eat, sitting elbow to elbow on a mat that wrapped us around the generous meal. In the distance, I noticed a growing flame. Olive trees were on fire. I looked around at the family members when we all noticed and saw on their faces something frightening, resignation. They were so accustomed to watching their land burn that they were resigned to it. We watched an Israeli army jeep drive past the fire, doing nothing about the huge flames burning innocent olive trees, the crops and livelihood of Sarra villagers. We continued to eat as the land burned.

Yesterday I visited Wad Rahal, a beautiful village nestled among sloping hills and surrounded by olive trees just a few kilometers from Bethlehem. We drove the winding path from route 60 to the village, the foundation of The Wall followed us. When built, The Wall will separate the village from its own olive trees. It will sit 10 meters from the village's one school. It will cut off the village from the highway. I met with two college students, both activists doing their best to train the village in nonviolent ways to resist The Wall and organize weekly demonstrations.

We watched an Israeli army jeep drive past the fire, doing nothing about the huge flames burning innocent olive trees, the crops and livelihood of Sarra villagers.

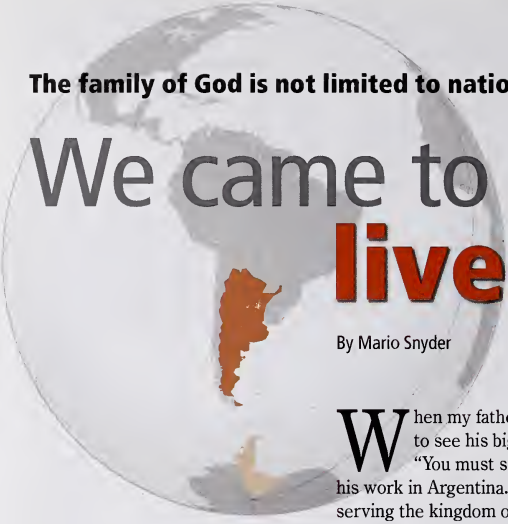
They said that, about twice a month, Israeli soldiers enter one of the homes in the village in the middle of the night to do a search. They use the butt of their machine guns to bang on the door. If it isn't opened in time, they break down the door. They wake up the entire family and search the entire house, breaking dishes and wreaking havoc. One of the guys said if he hears any noise at night he believes it is the army, and it scares him. His home does not feel safe.

Each Thanksgiving, many recognize that the holiday symbolizes a loss of land and livelihood for one group of people and the victory of another. While I stare at The Wall from my kitchen window, I think about my neighbors in Aida Refugee Camp, who were kicked out of their homes in 1948 so that Israeli families could have a homeland. I am thankful that during my Thanksgiving dinners at home, I have never looked out the window to see our trees burning down. I am thankful that I can sleep, with reckless abandon, after a huge turkey (or prime rib) meal, knowing that I don't need to feel scared. My home smells like detergent and wood and Red Rose tea, and I'm not afraid of losing it.

Most of the time I feel that the conflict for a home in Israel and Palestine is too complicated to ever truly grasp, but sometimes, like on Thanksgiving, it seems pretty simple.

Cat Rabenstine is a free-lance journalist living in the West Bank. Along with maintaining www.withoutamap.org, she teaches journalism workshops to Palestinian kids and assists villages committed to nonviolence establish websites and media/advocacy strategies.

The family of God is not limited to national borders.



www.commons.wikimedia.org

We came to Argentina to live for good

By Mario Snyder

When my father baptized me in 1945, the Lord spoke to me. As I looked up to see his big hands, hands that disciplined me often, I felt God saying: "You must serve me and continue in the steps of your father and complete his work in Argentina." So with baptism came my consecration to the mission of serving the kingdom of God.

I was 17 then, and we had to return to Canada on furlough. The next step for me was completing my high school at Rockway Mennonite School, then college and seminary in Goshen, Ind. Then the Lord took us to serve among Latin Americans in Chicago, where we lived for seven years. In 1960, supported by the Elmira (Ontario) Mennonite Church, we returned to Argentina to install ourselves as a family and begin a new outpost for the Mennonite church in the northern suburb of Greater Buenos Aires called Villa Adelina.

Egda (left) and Mario Snyder

Photo provided

It was like coming home. My youth friends were at the airport to receive us, taking us to the Floresta church for a welcoming party where pastor Laurence and Dorothy Brunk hosted us. They helped us get started in the new mission field. Pastor Albano Luayza, one of the oldest and main leaders of the Argentine church, congratulated us and said: "We are most happy that the first missionary kid has come home."

We moved to the new area in Villa Adelina after living five weeks with the Brunks, Barbara (my first wife) and our three children: Mary Kathryn, Mark and Ann. We started meetings in our home with a half dozen members of the Floresta church who lived close by in the suburb where we were to go.

We walked in the steps of the apostles of Jesus. We related to people in our neighborhood in a natural way. Talking and testifying to them on the street, markets and everywhere we went. We went house to house, sharing Christian literature, offering Bibles and New Testaments, often praying for the sick and comforting the needy.

We also celebrated open-air meetings. The first one had the help of evangelist Nestor Comas from the Bragado church, who came with his son Daniel and his piano accordion. The six disciples of our group plus our three little children went to the town square or plaza on Good Friday and started our meetings, just before the local priest began the traditional Catholic procession. The visiting preacher did not arrive in time, so I had to do it all. I explained our presence there and sang a couple of choruses with a megaphone, then preached a short message explaining the death of Jesus on the cross for the remission of our sins. One woman was converted. With her, Estela O Campo and our family, plus the four members who came from Floresta church, we inaugurated the new church in our house.

Those were wonderful days, as we saw how the Lord continued to add those who

MennoMedia

An agency of Mennonite Church USA
and Mennonite Church Canada

New from MennoMedia

...books, curriculum, and media resources!

Waging Peace

Muslim and Christian Alternatives

Produced by MennoMedia

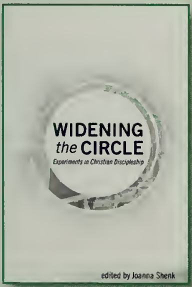
Waging Peace
Muslim and Christian Alternatives
a documentary about overcoming mistrust, hatred, and violence

This documentary, aired this fall on ABC-TV stations, shows how Christians and Muslims are working for peace, tolerance, and understanding in Canada and the U.S. Sometimes they are working together—like a Mennonite-Muslim project in Ontario—and sometimes separately. The stories and interviews provide an alternative to the anti-Muslim voices often heard in North American society.

Airing Oct. 23 - Dec. 18, 2011. Check local listings. **$24.95 USD/$27.95 CAD**
www.WagingPeaceAlternatives.com

Widening the Circle

Experiments in Christian Discipleship


WIDENING the CIRCLE
Experiments in Christian Discipleship
edited by Joanna Shenk

Edited by Joanna Shenk

A variety of authors tell the stories of intentional communities who have been influenced by the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and other movements—and yet who find themselves on the margins of the institutional church. The stories offer fresh insight at a time when North American Christianity is rapidly changing.

$14.99 USD / $17.25 CAD

Available November 15, 2011
www.MennoMedia.org/WideningtheCircle

The MennoMedia Book Club is Back!

Sign up at **www.MennoMedia.org/BookClub** to receive montly emails on featured titles. Members of this club receive a code for a 20% discount on those items, including certain titles on this insert. You can also join by calling:
1-800-245-7894 (U.S.),
1-800-631-6535 (Canada).

With the Word: Psalms

A Bible Study and Devotional Guide for Groups or Individuals

WITH THE WORD
PSALMS
A Bible Study and Devotional Guide for Groups or Individuals

This new Bible study and devotional series explores specific books of the Bible from an Anabaptist perspective. This is the first title in the series, and the next title, *Luke*, will be available in December. Two more studies will be released in 2012. Each session takes groups or individuals through study, discussion, and reflection before ending with short devotionals.

$8.99 USD / $10.34 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/WiththeWordPsalms

www.MennoMedia.org • CANADA 1-800-631-6535 • USA 1-800-245-7894

Also New from MennoMedia...

Quills
by Aaron J. Ratzlaff

Quills

Written and Illustrated by Aaron Ratzlaff

Many circumstances leave us feeling alone, embarrassed, and unlovable. Through the story of Porcupine, this book teaches children that, thankfully, God gives us friends and family who love us unconditionally. For ages 4-8.

$13.99 USD / $16. CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/Quills

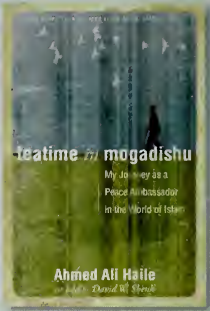
Teatime in Mogadishu

My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam

by Ahmed Ali Haile as told to David W. Shenk

The author returned to the chaos of his native Somalia with a clear mission: to bring warring clans together to find new paths of peace—often over a cup of tea. Into this moving memoir of conversion and calling, Haile weaves poignant reflections on the meaning of his journey.

$14.99 USD / $17.25 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/TeatimeinMogadishu


teatime in mogadishu
My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam
Ahmed Ali Haile
David W. Shenk

Kids Can Club
Kids Can Build Bridges

New from the Kids Can Club

Kids Can Build Bridges

Children are invited to learn how to put the Beatitudes into practice.

$19.99 USD / $22.99 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/KidsCanBuildBridges

Can
Kids Can Be Blessed

Kids Can Be Blessed

Taking an imaginary trip around the world, children discover that people everywhere have similarities and differences.

$19.99 USD / $22.99 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/KidsCanBeBlessed

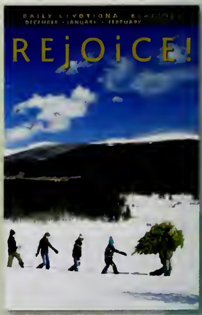
Bearing Witness

Rejoice!

Daily Devotional Readings

This quarterly MennoMedia magazine offers encouragement and inspiration every day of the year.

Annual individual subscription: $30.25 USD / $34.79 CAD


DAILY DEVOTIONAL READINGS
DECEMBER • JANUARY • FEBRUARY
REJOICE!

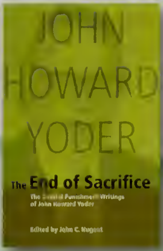
Purpose

Stories of Faith and Promise

This weekly MennoMedia magazine fills your heart with thoughtful passages and enriches your daily Christian walk with inspirational stories.

Annual individual subscription: $24.70 USD / $28.40 CAD

www.MennoMedia.org • CANADA: 1-800-631-6535 • USA: 1-800-245-7894


JOHN HOWARD YODER
The End of Sacrifice
Edited by John C. Nugent

The End of Sacrifice

The Capital Punishment Writings of John Howard Yoder

Edited by John Nugent

Yoder was a renowned theologian and prolific writer until his death in 1997. But he never wrote a book about the death penalty, which he strongly opposed for biblical and sociological reasons. Now his unpublished writings on the subject over four decades have been collected.

$16.99 USD / $19.99 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/EndofSacrifice

After We're Gone

A Christian perspective on estate and life planning for families that include a dependent member with a disability.

$8.99 USD / $10.00 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/AfterWereGone

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower
After We're Gone
A Christian perspective on estate and life planning for families that include a dependent member with a disability

Supportive Care in the Congregation
Providing a congregational network of care for persons with significant disabilities

Supportive Care in the Congregation

A guide to providing a congregational network of care for persons with significant disabilities.

$8.99 USD / $10.00 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/SupportiveCareintheCongregation

Newly refreshed titles from Herald Press...

More-With-Less Cookbook, New Edition

by Doris Janzen Longacre

More-with-Less

Now with more than 850,000 copies around the globe, it has become the favorite cookbook of many families. The new edition includes updated statistics and other information.

Paper. $19.99 USD / $22.99 CAD,
Hard/spiral. $24.99 USD / $28.99 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/MoreWithLess

Simply in Season, Expanded Edition

by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert

Simply in Season

This newly expanded edition of the popular cookbook not only encourages the use of locally grown, fairly traded foods in season, but meets an important need for information and inspiration about living and eating simply.

Paper. $19.99 USD / $22.99 CAD,
Hard/spiral. $24.99 USD / $28.99 CAD

www.MennoMedia.org/SimplyinSeason

The Upside-Down Kingdom

by Donald B. Kraybill

THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM
Donald B. Kraybill
BEST RELIGIOUS BOOK

With over 100,000 copies sold and translated into six languages, this book continues to change lives with Christ's upside-down message about the kingdom of God. The new edition includes brief essays on the book's impact.

$16.99 USD / $19.54 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/UpsideDownKingdom

Forgiveness

A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School

by John L. Ruth

forgiveness
John L. Ruth

This book is the fifth-anniversary edition written in response to the mass killing of Amish schoolchildren in Pennsylvania. Focusing on the response from the local Amish community, this is a meditation on forgiveness and following Christ in the midst of grief.

$10.99 USD / $12.64 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/Forgiveness

www.MennoMedia.org • CANADA: 1-800-631-6535 • USA: 1-800-245-7894

MennoMedia Bestsellers

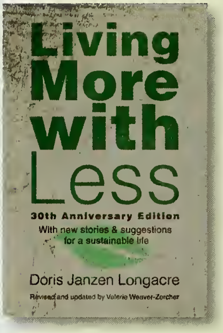
Mennonite Girls Can Cook

By Lovella Schellenberg, Anneliese Friesen, Judy Wiebe, Betty Reimer, Bev Klassen, Charlotte Penner, Ellen Bayles, Julie Klassen, Kathy McLellan, Marg Bartel

Mennonite girls can Cook

Based on a highly successful blog with over 3 million visits to date, this coffee-table cookbook celebrates hospitality, blessing, and friendship. Most of the authors are Mennonite Brethren women in British Columbia of Russian-German heritage. Their royalties will go to feed hungry children.

$24.99 USD / $28.99 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/MennoniteGirlsCanCook


Living More with Less
30th Anniversary Edition
With new stories & suggestions for a sustainable life
Doris Janzen Longacre
Revised and updated by Valerie Weaver-Zercher

Living More with Less

30th Anniversary Edition

by Doris Janzen Longacre

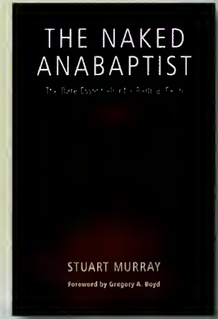
Revised and updated by Valerie Weaver Zercher, this new edition is true to the late author's spirit of living in ways that keep the poor, God's creation, and each other in mind—and is loaded with new and practical tips for living more with less.

$13.99 USD / $16.09 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/LivingMoreWithLess

The Naked Anabaptist

The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith

by Stuart Murray


THE NAKED ANABAPTIST
The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith
STUART MURRAY
Foreword by Gregory A. Boyd

This book, written by a new Anabaptist from Britain, peels back the layers of Mennonite tradition to reveal the core components of Anabaptists, showing a way of following Jesus that challenges, disturbs, and inspires us, summoning us to wholehearted discipleship.

$13.99 USD / $16.09 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/NakedAnabaptist

Order online at www.MennoMedia.org/Store
or call 1-800-245-7894 **(U.S.)**
1-800-631-6535 **(Canada)**

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

Printed in USA.

should be saved, and little by little the Villa Adelina church grew. By 1964 it had its own native pastor, so we could go to a new place and begin another work, for we came to stay and plant many churches for the Lord.

In all of this we worked at it as a family. Our 6-year-old daughter Mary Kathryn witnessed in school and with Mark, won several children from the neighborhood, so we started open-air children's meetings every Saturday. Then the children grew up, and we faced a big problem.

In those days, missionaries sent their adolescent children to college "back in the USA." All our children decided to stay and study in our country. Later, they married Argentines, and now we have 16 grandchildren, and each family is serving in their local church.

I remember the difficulties I had with some relatives on this matter. One of them wanted her grandchildren to study in a Mennonite college "at home." I trained my children in this kingdom way of thinking. I told them that home was Argentina, for the Lord had called me to return here, so this was our home. Furthermore Argentina had good schools and universities, and since we were members of Christ, we belonged to the larger church family; the "family of God" was in this country. And as T.K. Hershey, one of the first missionaries to this country said: "The distance to heaven was the same from Argentina as it was from the States."

The church here in the "mission field" understands that when a missionary comes to the field and plants a congregation, he should become part of it, a member of the family of God in that country. He should be willing to become one with the people he serves, speak the language, administer his support without marking a difference with his colleagues, accept the practices and culture, not only eat the good barbecues with good dark wine but drink maté, be ready to receive people at any time and have supper at 8 p.m. or later and be a soccer fan instead of being preoccupied with who wins the World Series, although as a foreigner he should not get into politics. For we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

The missionary must be like Abraham, a person led by the Holy Spirit, living simply and willing to establish himself in the place the Lord indicates, putting aside customs and manner of his country of origin, following the Lord in total obedience. He is one who undergoes many trials but always with his eyes fixed on Jesus.

When J.D. Graber spoke to the missionaries who were going to the mission field in the summer of 1957 in Harrisonburg, Va., he challenged us "to be servants of Christ, preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, plant the church of Jesus Christ and be ready to suffer for the cause of the kingdom."

So we came to Argentina (by the Mexican way of Chicago) to do this big job, for as Jesus said: "You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appoint you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name" (John 15:16). After 55 years of Christian ministry, we have had the joy of planting a half dozen congregations, helping provide leaders for all of them and being pastor of the pastors who today continue the work.

After 55 years of Christian ministry, we have had the joy of planting a half dozen congregations, helping provide leaders for all of them and being pastor of the pastors who today continue the work.

And we also had the joy of raising a family for the service of God. Today our six children are married and all serving the Lord in their respective congregations. We experience as grandparents the many rewards God has for us. We experience many of Gods rewards, for we are surrounded by their love and care. And we enjoy having close by our 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, who are following in the steps of their fathers. Soon our youngest married son will be departing to Italy with his two little ones to cooperate with God's mission enterprise there.

Nobody is sorry for not being able to live in the First World. The Snyder family is part of the big family of God in Argentina. We are at peace and happy, for we have done the Lord's will. What is in the future for us and the church?

The Lord will continue to work, and his church in Argentina will grow holier, more united and bigger. It will send more of its own missionaries and plant more new congregations in the interior of the country.

As the prophet said: "The earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord."

And as T.K. Hershey said at 79 years of age, I also say: "I would do it again."

Mario Snyder lives in Argentina.

21st-century mission: a transformed posture

Stanley W. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission and service agency of Mennonite Church USA.

We can no longer see those with whom we engage as objects or statistics to be reported. We are subjects together in God's mission.

The world has changed, and with it mission has changed. While 66 percent of all Christians lived in Europe in 1910, by 2010 only 26 percent lived there. By contrast, less than 2 percent of all Christians lived in Africa in 1910; this number skyrocketed to almost 22 percent by 2010. Realities like these have caused some to reflect that when delegates gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, for the 1910 World Missionary Conference—the first major ecumenical mission conference—the typical Christian looked like a white Western male whose age was about 48. Today, however, the typical Christian is more likely to be a black African female whose age is about 28.

These demographic realities have a huge impact on the face of missions. Of the 1,200 delegates gathered at Edinburgh in 1910, only 17 were from the global South. At the 2010 gathering of the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, more than 2,500 of the 4,000 participants were from the global South. (The change in location from the northern to the southern hemisphere reflects the shift in the center of gravity in the global church.)

This shift means those coming to Christ increasingly experience the gospel via the witness of Nigerian, Brazilian, Korean or South African missionaries. The gospel no longer bears the burden of being seen as a Western religion. This is a shift so profound that we have not even begun to appreciate its significance. "The day of Western missionary dominance is over," says Scott Moreau, chair of intercultural studies at Wheaton (Ill.) College. Today's missionary is just as likely to be a black African in Europe, a northern Indian in south India or a Korean in China.

For Mission Network these shifts, along with our core Anabaptist convictions about noncoercion, have prodded us to embark on a journey that is transforming the way we think about mission and how we lead our partners in area conferences and congregations in mission engagement. Here are some of the shifts we see as necessary in moving toward a transformed posture in mission:

1. We in the West must surrender to God and the global church the "burden of responsibility" for mission. Instead, we must join God's Spirit working around the world through mission workers of all nationalities. We must surrender the "universal" validity of an affluent, white, northern interpretation of the gospel in favor of a story that has many faces and myriad cultural accents.

2. We must surrender the assumption that initiative and direction for any mission engagement is our birthright. We will need to cultivate the capacity to accept roles being assigned to us rather than assuming that the prerogative for leadership belongs to those from the West. This requires an identity shift from being architects, managers and enforcers of accountability to becoming companions, co-laborers and participants in a shared vision.

3. We will need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the gospel that distances us from the alliance between mission and colonial interests in a previous era. We must repudiate the perception of our mission being driven by a benign desire to disseminate the benefits of a perceived superior culture.

4. Since our partners in mission in the global South are faced with poverty and political oppression as a perennial challenge to the gospel, we must embrace a more holistic approach to our witness. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and advocating for justice must be as integral to our mission as making verbal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. For the sake of the gospel itself, we must imagine a way of being together in mission that is rooted in relationships of mutuality, integrity and authentic sharing. We can no longer see those with whom we engage as objects or statistics to be reported. We are subjects together in God's mission. Our congregations must expect a different type of accountability than reports on the "number of souls saved."

We must expect to hear stories of God at work through our partners as lives are transformed by Jesus Christ through the authentic witness of our partners. Our aim is to move beyond the perception in the South that people are "having something done for them" or "on their behalf" or—worse yet—"having something done to them."

We are learning as we go what it means to surrender the need to be architects of the story. We are discovering, rather, the good news embedded in authentic partnerships and life-giving relationships through which we can point to Jesus, the Giver of Life. TM

Swarming at dusk

Gerald Shenk ponders autumn leaves and family dynamics in Goshen, Ind.

Writing this column over the past five years has brought me repeatedly to themes of fragility and resilience in the lives of real families. To rehearse the stories of families over decades and generations is also to be impressed with the grace in evidence whenever they somehow work. I'm grateful for the mercies, delighted in the surprises, sobered by the failures and grieved with the tragedies.

A father my age was killed this week in our town in what was reportedly a home invasion and robbery (see story, page 39). Jim Miller was a scholar of life sciences. He taught biology and prepared many students for careers in medicine and health. He is remembered and appreciated as a tough teacher who cared for his students.

We joined those who mourn, observing solemn silence and lighting candles to hold back the clutch of dark fear. But with the rent in the fabric of one family, the larger family of faith swarmed to form a safety net of prayer, vigilance and comfort.

Families in my faith community spring into full alert when tragedy occurs. They hold life together for us when we're not sure we can hold it together ourselves. I've seen this happen again and again. And while it feels like a miracle of grace—and in many ways it is—such ready care springs from long, sustained attention to love for God and neighbor.

Whether a particular catastrophe is narrow like a knife or broad as a bludgeon, the care that swarms is the gift of a particular community that knows the value of patient faithfulness and small acts of kindness cultivated over years of vigilance.

I've been a parent for more than three decades. I am mindful now, more than at the beginning, of the origins and ends of family life. And I'm much more circumspect. My children are grown, each wonderfully contributing to the well-being of their communities with worthy work. Weddings have brought us joy and new daughters to love. Our year-old grandson is ready to make his first solo visit to our home. We have plenty to rejoice in.

Yet the rejoicing is in large part because so many others are also woven into our family story. Folks in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Evanston and Harrisonburg stood like family with us through tough times. Many teachers empowered our children along the way. Our peers and friends served as mentors, spiritual guides and counselors. In the family of faith, others saw potential in our children that escaped us and called out gifts we'd overlooked or undervalued.

We rejoice in our children's friends and how gifted, loyal and fun they are. We enjoy watching them coach and encourage each other, with empathy and wise counsel. At the close of a recent long wedding evening, I heard one telling another: "Girl, if you didn't know where the restroom is until now, you're not drinking enough water."

I also take great pleasure in being available as the kind of father my adult children still turn to in a crunch. The phone calls now are about where to track down tools or how to interpret an insurance company's exasperating way of telling you they didn't quite cover everything you expected them to. Even with the Internet as instant resource for everything from recipes to marriage advice, I am happy to be a father who is occasionally the person of choice to vent with.

I often reflect on what parenting means at this stage. It's being available by phone for ready counsel. It's being agile enough to speak of my own experience of workplace struggles in ways that reassure my children they aren't the first generation to face such tough dilemmas. Sometimes it means making myself more vulnerable, admitting to failures they weren't aware of at the time. I, too, had to deal with a difficult boss; I made choices that cost me in ways I hadn't expected; I have regrets about the ways I handled certain conflicts.

There are many makeovers I wish to script if it were possible. My limitations and failures might not have been evident to the children at the time. There were times when our situation was more precarious than children should have to know in the moment. And now they deserve to know that we struggled, too, that finances were a significant concern, that we worried about the strength of our support network and that the choices for service to the church and for advanced education were both costly and rewarding at the same time.

Above all, I want them to know the reality of a faith family network that vibrates with beauty and abundant goodness; a community whose thick fabric of care will be there for them through the best of times and the worst of times. Real families will always need real communities, both to survive and especially to thrive. TM

Real families will always need real communities, both to survive and especially to thrive.

Getting high on freedom

Jonathan Beachy is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Dozens of miles of hard dirt road, which in dry times billowed clouds of dust but after a rainstorm became vehicle-clutching-mud, isolated me from universal reality. Or so I thought. As the only nonindigenous health-care provider in an indigenous village in the Paraguayan Chaco, I wondered how could I hope to understand or connect with the Enxet. Then I got to know Eulogio, a quiet, unassuming Enxet father.

Despite all odds, he had survived tubercular meningitis and become a capable laboratory assistant. Because he had completed second grade in a Spanish language school, he was an excellent cultural broker. As I looked for a way to deal redemptively with a young man who consulted for what was most certainly a sexually transmitted disease (STD) but who emphatically denied the possibility, I was lost. How could I convince him that he had a problem? The bridge between our worlds was too long and had too few lights. I asked Eulogio to help me.

I have a dream that as we open the doors to safety and mutual support, we will become more authentically alive.

Today, many of us find ourselves with an STD that threatens to destroy us and our families. I refer to pornography. A CNN columnist wondered if it is "driving men crazy" (see http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/30/is-pornography-driving-men-crazy/). Few of us are willing to recognize the depth of entrapment we experience with this STD. Perhaps Eulogio's words to me can help us.

"First of all," he said, "you must leave the clinic; the clinic has ears. Then you must walk along the path with the person you want to help. (The path is narrow and does not allow people to walk side by side or make eye contact; it provides privacy). As you walk along the path, you will talk about a lot of things, and then in the course of the conversation you might say, 'You know, when I was younger, this and that happened to me, did anything like that ever happen to you?' "

Without a doubt, all of us who have become entrapped by pornography are terrified of being discovered. We don't want anyone else's ears or eyes to know what we are experiencing. So we take the necessary precautions to be safe and, more importantly, steadfastly avoid self-disclosure. Even though the path is narrow, and privacy is assured, most of us do not feel safe enough to become involved in a mutual support group like SAA (sex addicts anonymous), or we effectively deny, at least to ourselves, that we have an issue with porn.

What would happen if we, within our faith communities, could provide that safety though groups that function like AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)? What would happen if we could cease to deny that pornography has invaded our lives and is "driving us crazy"? How would we change in other ways? Can we be bold enough to stop waiting for someone to do something and do something ourselves?

I have a dream that as we open the doors to safety and mutual support, we will become more authentically alive. We will grow and value each other even more, rather than less. In my dream, we will cease to be ashamed to say with joy, "I am on day 93, or day 2, or week 35 of abstinence." Each of us must define what sobriety means. A group could help us define that standard, but we must come to terms with most undertreated and powerful of STDs in our era.

You know, when I was younger, as in last week, this and that happened to me. Has anything like that ever happened to you? TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

Mutual aid part of health coverage plan

Fifteen church plants receive subsidies through the Fair Balance Fund.

Photo provided

Lori and Jerry Acosta (center and back right), with children Dyran, Nicholes, Jonathan, Joshua. Lucy (in back) is Lori's sister.

When Jerry and Lori Acosta of Mathias, Texas, came to Wichita, Kan., in August to help launch a Hispanic church plant, Manos de Cristo (Hands of Christ), they did not have health insurance for themselves or their four sons.

But today they are in the process of enrolling in The Corinthian Plan—a Mennonite Church USA-sponsored health coverage and life insurance program based on mutual-care practices. And as a result of their family's participation in the plan, the Acostas will be able to focus on ministry without worrying about how to pay for medical costs.

"Being part of the plan helps me be more at ease and at peace, knowing that my family is taken care of in emergencies," says Jerry Acosta, who is working with a partnership of three Mennonite Church USA congregations in Wichita to launch the church plant on behalf of Western District Conference (WDC).

This reassurance and support is precisely what The Corinthian Plan is geared to provide, with its emphasis on mutual care across the church, says Keith Harder, director of the plan for Mennonite Church USA. Today, the plan provides benefits for pastors and staff members in 450 congregations within Mennonite Church USA. It also provides benefits for employees of some area conferences and church agencies.

At the end of the plan's second year, 50 of 450 participating congregations are receiving assistance from the fair balance fund—a feature that shapes the mutual-care aspect of the program.

"Each participating congregation provides $10 per average attendance each year, a facet of the plan inspired by 2 Corinthians 8, which encourages believers to generously support one another in times of need," Harder says. "It's exciting to see people pooling resources and sharing risks."

Church plants such as the new Manos de Cristo recognize how the plan helps them build upon a stronger foundation, Harder says. Many of the church plants are in urban areas, and often their budgets are minimal and their pastors bivocational.

Of the 50 congregations receiving a subsidy from the fair balance fund, 15 are new or recent church plants, Harder says. And just within the past several weeks, he's received eight new calls from church plants inquiring about the plan.

Warren Tyson, conference minister for Atlantic Coast and Eastern District area conferences, helped enroll Hiwet Legeta (Life for the Lord Church), a new Ethiopian church plant led by pastor Redeat Abebe and consisting of two house groups from Lancaster, Pa., and Philadelphia. And Tyson is working with Solidarity and Harmony Church, a Haitian church plant in Philadelphia led by pastor Bernard Sejour, to discern whether this church plant will join. One congregation in each of the area conferences Tyson serves as conference minister is receiving a subsidy from the fair balance fund, he says. In total, 13 of Atlantic Coast's 34 congregations participate, as do six of Eastern District's 17 congregations.

"The amount of subsidy a congregation receives to cover their pastor's health premium is determined by the size of the church budget," Tyson says. "And even though the cost of the premium for each congregation receiving subsidy can be a concern, the mutual care still lowers those premiums considerably."

An additional concern is how pastors can meet the $3,000 individual or $6,000 family high deductible if the pastor or his/her family has health-care expenses, he says. This may require conference leaders to secure additional support to assist a pastor family in a time of need.

The plan may not seem "equitable" from a worldly perspective. But it is "fair" from a churchly viewpoint shaped by the Anabaptist focus on peace- and justice-making and mutual care on a variety of fronts, says Nita Nikkel, chair of the support team for Manos de Cristo and a member of Mennonite Church of the Servant in Wichita.

"It's a plan that also ties into immigration issues, since many of our church plants consist of recent immigrants," says Nikkel, who is a member of WDC's new church plant task force and who chairs WDC's immigration task force. "It helps us share in God's mission right here at home by taking care of our pastors."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for Mennonite Church USA*

EMU alumna wins Nobel Peace Prize

Leymah Gbowee receives prize for her famous peace movement in Liberia.

Eastern Mennonite University alumna Leymah Gbowee is one of three women jointly awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced Oct. 7.

She shares the prize with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and women's rights activist Tawakkul Karman of Yemen.

Gbowee, who earned a master's degree in conflict transformation at EMU in Harrisonburg, Va., received the Nobel Prize for her work in organizing a peace movement to end the Second Liberian Civil War. She has become famous in her country and across the globe for mobilizing women.

Only 11 other women have won the peace prize in its 110-year history.

Gbowee graduated from EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) in 2007 with a master of arts degree. She attended CJP's Summer Peacebuilding Institute in 2004 and completed its Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) program in 2005.

In June at EMU, Gbowee participated in a by-invitation conference on the needs of women peacebuilders around the world. Participants included filmmaker Abigail Disney of the United States, Koila Costello-Olsson of Fiji, Suraya Sadeed of Afghanistan, and Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, a Kenyan-Muslim woman of Somali ethnic origin who received the 2007 Right Livelihood Prize. (Abdi died in a car accident after returning to Kenya in July.)

"As a direct result of this conference, we will be launching a women and peacebuilding program at our 2012 Summer Peacebuilding Institute," says Lynn Roth, executive director of CJP.

Gbowee was on the EMU campus Oct. 14-16 to receive the university's annual Alumna of the Year award as part of homecoming and family weekend celebrations.

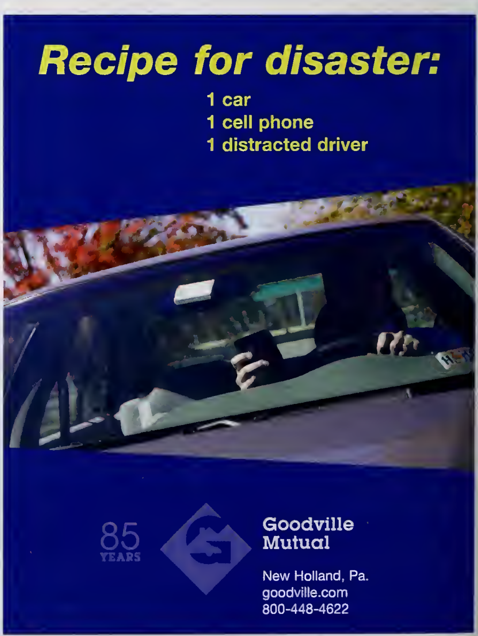
Gbowee is executive director of the Women, Peace and Security Network Africa, an organization she cofounded to build relationships across the West African subregion. Headquartered in Ghana, the organization supports women's capacity to prevent, avert and end conflict across the region.

She has won numerous awards, including the Blue Ribbon for Peace by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. She typically accepts such honors on behalf of her countrywomen.

Gbowee is the central figure in a documentary produced by Abigail Disney, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," which was be shown at EMU on Oct. 14. Completed in 2008, the documentary is part of a series that debuted on PBS stations nationwide on Oct. 18.—*Mike Zucconi of Eastern Mennonite University*

Lindsey Grosh

Leymah Gbowee speaks at an Eastern Mennonite University chapel.



Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Professor killed in home invasion

Jim Miller taught at Goshen College for 31 years.

Members of the Goshen (Ind.) College community reacted with shock, disbelief and sorrow when they learned about the homicide of professor of biology James S. Miller on Oct. 9. Since then, a candlelight vigil and convocation on campus, visitations and two church services have helped students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends cope with the tragic death and given them a deeper appreciation for Miller's many contributions to Goshen College.

The Goshen Police Department reported that Miller, 58, was killed during a home invasion at 1 a.m. His wife, Linda Miller, was wounded in the attack and hospitalized for five days. She continues to recover. In an Oct. 14 press conference, the police chief, Wade Branson, said the department continued to analyze evidence and interview people of interest but had no suspect.

While police spent countless hours investigating the case, family, friends and members of the college community gathered six times over nine days following the homicide to praise God, pray for the Miller family and remember Miller's 31 years of service to the college.

Two hours after his burial on Oct. 17, nearly 900 people crowded into Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in rural Goshen for a memorial service led by Terry Diener, lead pastor at the church. Two of Miller's children played a duet on flute and piano, while his brother and sister offered recollections from their childhood with their older brother.

President James E. Brenneman offered condolences to Linda and their children, Lisa Rose Martin and Leanne and Robert Miller. Brenneman said Miller understood better than most the Scripture's claim that if one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part experiences joy, every part rejoices with it (1 Corinthians 12:26 paraphrase).

"We not only suffer with you in your loss, we extend to you our deepest, heartfelt sympathies, our ceaseless prayers and abiding support. We, along with you, will lose parts of Jim in bits and pieces for a long, long time to come. The body is broken," Brenneman said.

Miller taught upper-level courses taken by students in health-related tracks. Brenneman referred to the legacy Miller has left behind.

"We are thankful that in major research facilities and makeshift medical hovels," Brenneman said, "at countless bedsides, in operating rooms and drop-in clinics all across the globe and right across the street, thousands are being tended to, cared for, blessed and will be so for years to come by those taught by Dr. Jim Miller."

Brenneman also recalled Miller's pride in Robert and Leanne, who are members of the Goshen High School band. The entire band attended the memorial service and played three hymns, which drew tears from some people.

Less than 19 hours after Miller died on Oct. 9, Brenneman and campus pastor Bob Yoder led a candlelight vigil on campus, which was attended by nearly 500 people. The crowd heard words of comfort and sorrow from Brenneman and Yoder. The next morning, Brenneman led a convocation to remember Miller. In between hymns and periods of silence, students, faculty and staff members offered brief comments about Miller, which evoked tears as well as laughter. Throughout the week, sorrow, joy and gratitude were common emotions expressed as students and colleagues coped with Miller's death and recalled his legacy amid extensive news media coverage.

Meanwhile, administrators kept the campus community informed about the status of the homicide investigation and encouraged students and employees to keep safety foremost on their minds. The Goshen Police Department provided extra patrols around campus and adjacent neighborhoods.

Miller graduated from Bluffton (Ohio) University in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He completed his doctoral degree in physiological chemistry (now known as medical biochemistry) at Ohio State University in 1980 and came to Goshen College that year. The Goshen College board of directors granted him tenure as associate professor of biology in June 1985.—*Richard R. Aguirre for Goshen College*

60 churches join '100 Shades of Green'

Creation Care Network pleased with goal in Purposeful Plan.

It would be easy for the casual reader to miss the creation care goals listed in the Purposeful Plan, a vision for the Mennonite Church USA's next 10 years that was unveiled at the Pittsburgh 2011 convention. But to members of the Creation Care Council of Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN), their inclusion in the stewardship section of the document marks a significant step forward.

These lines state that Mennonite Church USA will encourage its congregations to appoint a liaison to MCCN and complete a review of their creation-care efforts using a score sheet available on the MCCN website (http://www.mennocreationcare.org)

Andre Gingerich Stoner, MC USA's director of holistic witness and interchurch relations, assisted in shaping the Purposeful Plan and played a role in the inclusion of MCCN's goals. Stoner observed that creation care is now on the church's radar screen but believes there is a lot of work to be done before all members of Mennonite Church USA understand God's project of shalom as involving our relationship with creation.

"Many of us see creation care as a trendy movement happening in the culture around us that we don't want to miss out on, but we do not understand what it has to do with Christian faith," Stoner says.

Luke Gascho, who chairs the MCCN Creation Care Council, is particularly pleased with creation care's inclusion in the stewardship section of the Purposeful Plan.

"I believe the purposeful plan is a great tool that will help both congregations and agencies better understand the church's direction," he says. "Having MCCN objectives named gives credence to what have often appeared to be our independent goals."

Gascho cites Colossians 1:15-20 as one of the texts that grounds him in MCCN's work. "While we do a good job promoting community over and against individualism, the biblical text calls us to recognize that we are a community of all created things," he says.

MCCN has been inviting congregations to choose creation-care liaisons and share progress with its network since 2009, when the organization launched its 100 Shades of Green campaign. To become a 100 shades congregation, churches must name a liaison to MCCN and be in some way involved in caring for creation, even if beginning steps are small. Some 60 congregations in the United States and Canada have joined the initiative.

Creation Care Council members chose the name "100 Shades of Green" to reflect the wide range of ways people heed God's call to care for the earth, given different

(Continued on page 41)

John Wierwille

Sara Kathryn holds at goat during the farm camp in July. She is pastor John Wierwille's daughter.

Berea Mennonite: "Before we dug up the church yard and planted potatoes, I don't think people even knew we were here," says John Wierwille, pastor of Berea Mennonite Fellowship, Atlanta, with a chuckle. "Now we're growing, and the farm is no small part of that."

Berea Mennonite is one of at least four 100 Shades of Green congregations with community gardens—though in this case, farm is a better term. The small urban church has three acres under cultivation and grows more than 70 different organic vegetables on the east edge of Atlanta. Now in the garden's second year, the church sells its food at local farmers' markets and provides a first fruits tithe to the community, distributed through a free clinic. Wierwille, who serves as its MCCN liaison, sees the farm as an integral part of the church's ministry.

"Our relationship with the land is just as important as our relationship with brothers and sisters and enemies and strangers," he says. For Wierwille, salvation is not primarily individual. "It happens when we work together, risk together, celebrate the harvest together," he says. The farm gives the congregation that opportunity, as nearly every member is involved, even the toddlers. Meanwhile, curious neighbors drop in to get food or offer advice on wringing food from Georgia clay.

MCCN provides a venue for congregations like Berea to share their stories—and ask for help as needed. "Does anybody have a tractor with a front loader they're not using? Would anybody like to come visit Atlanta and help build a barn?" Wierwille wonders. These are the kinds of questions a network can help circulate.—*Jennifer Halteman Schrock*

Hesston observes first No Impact Week

470 members of community pack over 51,000 meals for hunger relief.

Hesston (Kan.) College observed its first No Impact Week Sept. 25-Oct. 2. The start of the fall semester kicked off an ongoing theme of sustainability spearheaded by the First-Year Experience class and the campus-wide common read *No Impact Man* (Picador, 2010) by Colin Beavan.

The week's events were an opportunity for the campus community to experiment with sustainable living and care of the environment on campus and in their personal lives.

Each day had a different focus, including consumption, trash, transportation, food, energy, water and eco-Sabbath. Activities, discussions and presenters related to each day's theme.

During the Transportation Expo on Sept. 27, students, faculty and staff exhibited and reflected on the form of transportation they use most often and talked about why they make that choice. Bicycles, a moped scooter, a diesel Volkswagen Jetta that runs on biodiesel, a diesel Dodge Ram 2500 and even those who walk were displayed.

The culminating event for the week was a service day in which the campus community and wider community packaged meals to be sent to the horn of Africa through Numana, an international hunger relief organization based in El Dorado, Kan.

Hesston's event was the first of Numana's month-long Statewide Packaging Event at colleges and universities across Kansas. About 470 student, faculty, staff and community volunteers packaged 51,296 meals in five hours.

Each meal—which consists of rice, soy protein, freeze-dried pinto beans and 21 vitamins and minerals—costs 30 cents to prepare and ship and feeds six people.—*Hesston College*

Curtis Denlinger

The Hesston College community comes together to package more than 51,000 meals during a food-packaging event on Oct. 1. Pictured clockwise from left in the foreground: Scott Weaver, Rachel Teeter, Angie Teeter, Collin Miller, Marion Bontrager and Alex Miller.

60 churches

(Continued from page 40)

contexts. Efforts featured on the MCCN website range from recycling to energy audits to rain gardens to advocacy.

Sometimes, geography determines a congregation's creation-care focus. A recent posting tells the story of Osler Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is one of the world's largest producers of uranium, and the town of Osler is located on the route that brings yellowcake south from the mines. In the 1970s, the congregation opposed a nuclear processing plant due to be built near Osler. Their efforts were successful, but uranium, its safety issues and its use in the military haven't gone away.

MCCN's website also features stories about Mennonite agencies and schools. According to Jim Alvarez, senior vice president of corporate services at Everence, "being good stewards of God's creation is a theme that resonates with many of the people we serve."

A recent expression of Everence's creation-care efforts is a building project that met the U.S. Green Building Council's standards for gold certification.

Alvarez also points out that as stockholders of companies, Everence has been influencing boards of directors by petitioning for changes to poor environmental practices for more than 15 years.

Churches who would like to join the 100 Shades of Green will find a "Join" form on the MCCN website.—*Jennifer Halteman Schrock of Mennonite Creation Care Network*

Phoenix 2013 theme calls for healing, transformation

Group that planned theme includes racial/ethnic individuals and immigrants.

Photo provided by Carol Roth

Hello Seniors!

Front row from left: Carol Roth, Hannah Nursalim, Glen Guyton, Scott Hartman, Rachel Swartzendruber Miller. Second row: Ken Gingerich, Nehemiah James Chigoji, Rebekka Stutzman. Third row: Kenneth Thompson, Saulo Padilla, Jasmine Harris. Fourth row: Ed Zuercher, Carmela Dow, David Boshart.

"Citizens of God's Kingdom: Healed in Hope" ("Ciudadanos del Reino de Dios: Sanados por la Esperanza") has been chosen as the theme for Mennonite Church USA's next biennial convention, to be held in Phoenix in 2013.

A 14-member working group met May 12-13 in Colorado Springs, Colo., to discern this theme, which was approved by the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board on Sept. 16 during its first meeting of the 2011–2013 biennium. The group consisted of two youth, one young adult, several pastors, a staff leader for Native Mennonite Ministries, a Phoenix city official who is Mennonite, the immigration education director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (MCC U.S.), two Executive Board members and four denominational staff members. In accordance with 11 commitments made by the board in January in response to concerns raised by Iglesia Menonita Hispana about the Phoenix location, eight of the 14 group members were racial/ethnic, and several were first-generation immigrants.

> I hope that my immigrant brothers and sisters who are directly affected by unjust immigration laws would find new hope in the church.
> —Saulo Padilla

"The theme was born out of a discernment process deeply rooted in Scriptures," says Saulo Padilla, a member of the group and director of the immigration education office of MCC U.S. "It is an invitation to bring down the walls of division that the world has built for us—to walk to Phoenix and proclaim that 'the earth is the Lord's' and that we are all created in the image of God.' …

"It's my hope that my brothers and sisters who think the Phoenix convention will be based on activism would discern with us that our call to go to Phoenix is deeply rooted in our Anabaptist theology and our faithful witness to justice and peace.

"I also hope that my immigrant brothers and sisters who are directly affected by unjust immigration laws would find new hope in the church and feel encouraged and supported by those of us who will be proclaiming our alliance over all to God's kingdom in the streets of Phoenix."

The context for the group's work in developing the convention theme was notably more complex than that of prior conventions. The Phoenix location became a source of controversy when Arizona passed a new anti-immigration law in April 2010. In January, after an eight-month churchwide discernment process, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board reaffirmed its 2009 decision to hold the convention in Phoenix.

The interest in and concern around Phoenix 2013 led the Executive Board to ask for the theme to be developed before the Pittsburgh 2011 convention in July so that they could share it with delegates and wait to decide upon it until after hearing delegates' responses.

The May meeting included a time of storytelling in which African, German and Latin American immigrants told stories of their journeys to become legal residents. Second-generation children of immigrants also shared their experiences and described how U.S. immigration policy affects them.

After prayer, quiet reflection and discussion, the group members chose four Scriptures: Psalm 24:1, Philippians 3:20-21, Romans 5:1-5 and Ephesians 2:14-22.

Guyton believes the opportunities for transformation inspired by the Phoenix 2013 theme should not be limited to the Phoenix 2013 convention or to the state of Arizona.

"If the only thing that the theme changes is five days in July, then we have missed the boat," he says. "Hopefully this is a message that we can work with for the next two years. It should speak to where we are going as a church."—*Johnny Kauffman and Annette Brill Bergstresser of MC USA*

Peanut Butter Project fights malnutrition

Mennonite medical nonprofiteers attend St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship.

Jeff Davis, Lumen Productions

Patients visit the Project Peanut Butter clinic in Southern Malawi.

When a mother of malnourished twins in Malawi trusted the work of Mark and Mardi Manary, the Manarys felt compelled to continue their work in fighting malnutrition by founding the nonprofit organization Project Peanut Butter (PPB).

These founders, the Manarys, attend St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship. When Mark finished his medical residency at Washington University in St. Louis in 1984, he and Mardi decided to work in Tanzania for several years through a connection of one of Mark's medical students—a Mennonite.

From that point on, the Manarys experienced a strong affinity with Mennonites. "We were very liked-minded," says Mardi, who remembers that someone at Ten Thousand Villages referred to her a "closet Mennonite."

When they visited St. Louis Mennonite, it "clicked," she says. Relationships at the church introduced them to Martin Histand, another Mennonite on the PPB staff, and the three of them—along with more than 40 local employees overseas—work together at PPB.

In 2002, says Mardi Manary, the mother who brought her twins to the clinic on the outskirts of Blantyre in Malawi, requested that Mardi's husband, Mark, a professor and medical doctor, feed them the high-calorie peanut butter paste that Mark's medical research tested and proved effective. However, Mark hesitated and told the mother that, unfortunately, the twins were too young for the paste, a "Ready to Use Therapeutic Food" (RUTF) and should wait until 12 months of age.

"But they're dying," the mother responded and promised she would return when the babies were 9 months old. She held to her word and brought her twins back to the Manarys' clinic, where they treated her twins. (The Manarys are now working on a formula for babies under 6 months).

Those familiar with medical work in Africa may be familiar with a similar peanut mixture called "Plumpy'nut" that is produced by Nutriset, a large French for-profit company. In contrast, PPB emphasizes a sustainable business model by using locally sourced ingredients and local management, unlike Nutriset's factories, which bring in outside ingredients. In Malawi, for example, the PPB factory purchases ingredients from local peanut and soy farmers. They also train local health workers to administer the RUTF.

While Mark faced criticism from the broader medical community for his locally sourced model of chiponde production, the woman in Malawi had faith in his work, which allowed for the creation of Project Peanut Butter in 2004, with offices in St. Louis, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Mali.

"Initially, the medical community thought we were reckless and dangerous," Mark said in a 2011 article in the *Huffington Post*. "When we started, this was not embraced by anybody. ... But in situations of chronic poverty, you're definitely going to get more mileage out of something you can embed in the local fabric. ... There was a certain amount of local pride [among Malawians] in being able to say, 'We treat malnutrition this way,' instead of 'they.' "

The Manarys' risks in implementing local production and management proved worthwhile. In 2007, the United Nations, World Health Organization and UNICEF endorsed Manary's model of RUTF distribution through community-based treatment protocols.

PPB works to treat malnourishment in countries such as Malawi, Sierra Leone, Mali and the Philippines through clinics and supported clinics that offer RUTF. Also called "chiponde," RUTF is a paste made from peanuts, sugar, dry milk powder, oil and a vitamin and mineral mix. Parents administer it to their children at home.

The company Nutriset and PPB maintained connections due to the fact that Nutriset benefitted from Mark's original research trials that proved the efficacy of RUTF. However, last year, PPB and Nutriset had a "friendly break."

"It didn't really help us to be associated with an organization making millions of dollars," says Histand, from Corvallis, Ore., a graduate of Hesston (Kan.) College and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Still, any potential confusion between Nutriset and PPB does not disrupt PPB's mission. "Plumpy'nut is the household name, like Coke or Kleenex," says Histand. "It's not a problem if people refer to our product as Plumpy'nut."

Histand lived in the Mennonite Voluntary Service house during his first year with PPB in 2010. He is now hired on as a full-time, long-term employee.—*Anna Groff*

Kansas church renovates house for family

South Hutchinson Mennonite raises double the usual amount for Advent project.

In August, Shelly Friesen and her two young children, moved into a renovated home in Hutchinson, Kan. The occasion will be a triumph in many ways. First, it's one of four homes near the Carey Salt Plant rescued from demolition. It's also the culmination of hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in cash and materials donated by volunteers from South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church (SHMC). And it's a first-time home purchase for Friesen, who went through Interfaith Housing Service's Individual Development Account program to learn about money management and save toward her down payment.

A couple of years ago, the house was one of 37 houses purchased from their owners by VigIndustries because they were too close to an area threatened by sinkholes caused by decades of solution salt mining. Most of the houses were demolished, but four were given to Interfaith and moved to vacant lots in Hutchinson and Nickerson. Then South Hutchinson Mennonite Church got involved as part of their Advent Conspiracy project this year. "Interfaith Housing Services came to us and said we have these four houses that need to be remodeled and redone for first-time home buyers, and you could adopt a house and see it to completion," says Jesse Blasdel, the church's student outreach pastor.

For the past few years, SHMC has participated in a movement called Advent Conspiracy. The first year, in 2008, they raised $35,000 for four water wells in Sudan. In 2009, church members ate rice and beans for two meals a week and used the $30,000 saved to fund microfinance loans for Afghan women to start businesses. In 2010, the church partnered with Interfaith Housing Services to renovate a home for Friesen's family.

"We asked the congregation to be creative with ways to save money to contribute," says Cindy Headings of SHMC. "Some turned down their furnaces, some sold items, some ate out less. An incredible $73,000 was raised. Due to generous donations of time, talent and resources—the project came in well under the $65,000 projected cost, enabling us to donate the excess to nine local agencies." SHMC voted with pennies to determine what percentage of the extra $27,000 went to each agency. Plans are underway for Advent Conspiracy 2011.—*Ken Stephens of* The Hutchinson News *with reporting by Anna Groff*

A year that will change your life

SALT is an intensely rich cross-cultural immersion experience for Christian young adults. Openings are currently available in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America/ Caribbean and the Middle East.

Qualifications:
Participants must be
- single
- 18 to 27 years old
- Canadian or U.S. citizens
- actively participating in a church
- committed to non-violent peacemaking

apply at salt.mcc.org

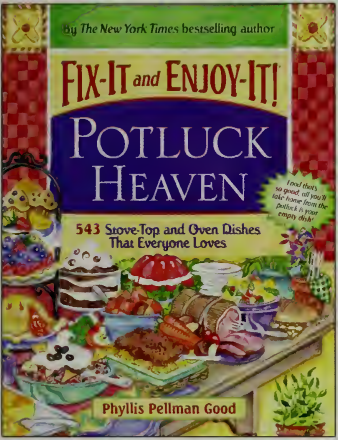
Rosedale Bible College's
Evangelical Anabaptist Symposium
November 10-12, 2011

Finding Community
in a World Torn Apart

Visit rosedale.edu to find out more

More than 10 million copies sold – of these two series!

New!


By The New York Times bestselling author
FIX-IT and ENJOY-IT!
POTLUCK HEAVEN
Food that's so good, all you'll take home from the potluck is your empty dish!
543 Stove-Top and Oven Dishes That Everyone Loves
Phyllis Pellman Good

Fix-It and Enjoy-It! Potluck Heaven:

543 Stove-Top and Oven Dishes That Everyone Loves

by Phyllis Pellman Good

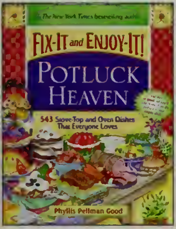
New York Times
bestselling author
Phyllis Pellman Good

Imagine yourself at the world's grandest potluck meal! Where to start? What to try first?

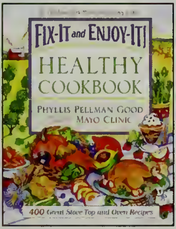
That is the feast you'll experience when you open ***Fix-It and Enjoy-It Potluck Heaven***. More than 500 recipes for stove-top and oven cooking, gathered from home cooks, fill these pages.

284 pages
$15.95, paperback • $18.95, plastic comb binding • $24.95, hardcover gift edition

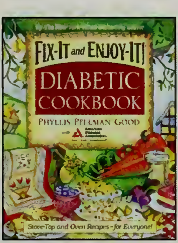
⇨ *For stove-top and oven:*



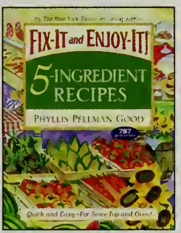
Fix-It and Enjoy-It! Potluck Heaven



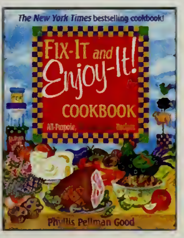
Fix-It and Enjoy-It! Healthy Cookbook



Fix-It and Enjoy-It! Diabetic Cookbook



Fix-It and Enjoy-It! 5-Ingredient Recipes



Fix-It and Enjoy-It! Cookbook

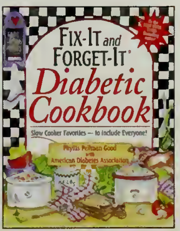
⇨ *For slow cookers:*

Fix-It and Forget-It Cookbook (Revised and Updated)

Fix-It and Forget-It Christmas Cookbook

Fix-It and Forget-It 5-Ingredient Favorites

Fix-It and Forget-It Lightly (Revised and Updated)



Fix-It and Forget-It Diabetic Cookbook

Good Books

Available from your favorite bookstore or online retailer.
To order directly from the publisher, please call 800/762-7171, ext. 221.
www.GoodBooks.com

Mennonite women find their voices

International Women's Fund: $74,000 in grants to 57 women in 18 countries

Women theologians from across the Americas met in Guatemala in 2007 to plan the women theologians gathering prior to the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, in 2009. Most of the planners and many of the participants were women who received scholarships for theological studies. From left: Alix Lozano, Colombia; Elizabeth Vado, Nicaragua: Gladys Siemens, Brazil; Sandra Campos, Costa Rica; Ofelia García, Mexico, and Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, United States.

Rebecca Osiro served many years as a lay minister among her people in Kenya, bringing songs of hope and healing to a homeland plagued with HIV-AIDS and other challenges. Today she is also praising God for the empowerment she gained as a recipient of the International Women's Fund (IWF) to prepare for full-time pastoral ministry. The support she received through Mennonite Women USA's IWF scholarship program helped fund her theological studies. The studies prepared her to become pastor of a congregation in Nairobi—the first woman to be ordained in the Mennonite Church in Kenya and a model for other African women who want to burst beyond restrictions to broaden their horizons (see photo on page 47).

"The education I received gave me skills to better face the tasks and challenges in the ministry and community," says Osiro, assistant secretary of a leadership support group, African Anabaptist Women Theologians. "The training exposed me to the international community, opened doors for a higher level of education and offered a means of wider networking.

"I now also assist young high school women in establishing income-generating opportunities and help them identify their gifts in the church, such as singing and leading devotions and Sunday school classes for children. The young women are now planning to produce Bible story songs for children in the African context."

Growing chorus: Osiro is part of a growing chorus of Mennonite women across the globe for whom financial support transforms an undeveloped call into a full and fruitful ministry. For the past three decades, programs sponsored by Mennonite women have enabled many of their Anabaptist sisters around the globe to be blessed with training for ministries that in turn bless the entire church.

The former Mennonite Women in Mission organization in the late 1970s began providing scholarships for women seeking theological training. Since 2001, Mennonite Women USA has awarded a total of $74,000 to 57 women in 18 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and North America.

The small scholarships of $500-$1,000 have empowered women to provide God's hope and healing. And the global significance of these women's gifts has encouraged Mennonite Women USA to enlarge the fund annually from $7,000 to $10,000, says Rhoda Keener and Ruth Lapp Guengerich, co-executive directors for Mennonite

Women USA. Referrals are made by Mennonite Church USA agencies, and recipients are chosen by the Mennonite Women USA board of directors.

"As I have worked with applicants and recipients," Keener says, "I have been amazed and humbled by the impact these women's ministries have had in their communities and their congregations. Their comprehensive ministries are providing healing for domestic violence, support for economic needs and … biblical and scriptural teachings. They help women in crisis—and when they help women, they help the entire community."

For example, recipients have helped develop counseling services for women in Chile, address economics in Africa, provide ministry to empower women in India, tackle human trafficking in Asia and train for a career in peace-building in the United States. Many of these women have also enlarged their spheres nationally and internationally.

The testimonies of recipients Sandra Campos, Rachel Bagh and Elizabeth Soto Albrecht harmonize with aspects of Osiro's story but also resound with the originality of their particular call, ethnicity and cultural background.

Sandra Campos, Costa Rica: As an IWF recipient, Sandra Campos has grown in her ministry locally, regionally and globally. She coordinates the Costa Rican Bible Institute and teaches some of its courses. She also serves as president of the Conference of Mennonite Churches in Costa Rica and has been appointed as a Latin American representative to the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Executive Committee.

In September 2010, she served as one of the organizers of the third meeting of Anabaptist Women Theologians of Central America, Belize and Panama. The gathering focused on several topics, including the current role of women in the church. Participants formed a declaration that included promoting models of leadership that reconcile the biblical with the contextual and further theological exchanges among women in various countries and organizations.

The support she received through IWF helped to form Campos into a leader who both reflects on these deeper issues and takes action to work for change and greater empowerment for women.

"As I serve in my various roles," she says, "I am given the opportunity to propose and implement changes in the national church through education programs, such as the Bible Institute for Justice and Peace Program. At the regional level, I am helping advance Anabaptist Women Theologians of Central America. This is helping build a greater awareness of our need to train women for greater participation in places that traditionally were shaped exclusively by men."

Because of attitudinal changes and increasing educational opportunities for women, the Costa Rican church has licensed seven women for pastoral work, she says. Theological training has allowed her and others to transcend the old boundaries.

"As women, we feel useful in our service to others and do not settle for being a spectator," Campos says. "We try to be part of work, changes and achievements that are part of building God's kingdom."

Rachel Bagh, India: Since IWF recipient Rachel Bagh completed her theological studies, she has been developing circles of support for theologically trained women in India. She is also teaching in a seminary and is involved in the development of conflict mediation workshops.

Bagh believes that increased theological training opportunities for women can lead them in living godly lives at home, at church and within their communities. The training can help them manage their homes with greater understanding in the Lord and impart kingdom values to their children, she says. Training can also help them better share the gospel message in their local communities and to provide help in domestic crisis situations.

Steve Keener

Rebecca Osiro became the first woman to be ordained in the Mennonite Church in Kenya and currently serves as a pastor in Nairobi.

"Domestic violence is rampant," she says, "and theologically trained women can help children who are at risk, extend financial help to educate girls, raise funds for church and mission and become agents of transformation.

"It is through the pastors group of the church and women through whom this work of conflict mediation can be extended," Bagh says. "As we get organized, there will be opportunities for women to extend the cause of peace.

"Theologically trained women of our churches need to renew their calling and commitment and realize their role and their ministry in the church and in the society. We are moving towards this slowly but surely."

(Continued on page 48)

Laurie Oswald Robinson

Women at the Mennonite Women USA Lydia Tea in Pittsburgh in July pray for Elizabeth Soto Albrecht as moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA. Albrecht later told the story of Lydia, the seller of purple.

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, United States: Mennonite Women USA recognized Soto Albrecht's gifts for leadership and provided an IWF scholarship to help support some of her theological training. The small IWF stipend has reaped great dividends for the church through Soto Albrecht's wide-ranging ministry.

For example, Soto Albrecht, is the first Hispanic person to become moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA. She has also authored two books that address issues related to women, family wholeness, and peace and nonviolence. They are *Family Violence: Reclaiming a Theology of Nonviolence* (Orbis Books, 2008) and *Seek Peace and Pursue It: Women, Faith and Family Care* (Faith and Life Resources, Mennonite Publishing Network, 2010).

"Because Mennonite Women USA believed in me enough to support my theological education, their investment has helped me turn around and give it back to the church in the form of ministry and service," says Soto Albrecht, a member of Laurel Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Soto Albrecht grew up in Puerto Rico, where she was baptized in her home church, Iglesia Menonita el Buen Pastor. She earned a doctor of ministry degree in the international feminist program of San Francisco (Calif.) Theological Seminary. She also earned a master of arts in religion from the Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico in San Juan and a bachelor's degree in health education from the Universidad de Puerto Rico. She also studied at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Soto Albrecht served with the Colombian Mennonite Church. During her last two years in Colombia, Soto Albrecht was pastor of Armenia Mennonite Church and was ordained in October 2004. She helped lead the Latin American Center of Anabaptist Resources (CLARA) and served as academic dean of the Colombian Mennonite Seminary in Bogotá, Colombia.

Currently, she is coordinator of field education and consultant for cross-cultural seminar trips for Lancaster Theological Seminary, a United Church of Christ seminary.

Song of giftedness: People involved in developing new leadership throughout the global Anabaptist church are hearing and affirming the chorus of IWF recipients. Their voices are gaining passion and persistence as they pursue God's call in the face of the 21st-century challenges and opportunities.

"The global church consists of both women and men, and in fact, women in many places around the world carry the bulk of the work and are the most present and ongoing in the life of the church in terms of social ministries and evangelism," says Nancy Heisey, past president of Mennonite World Conference and undergraduate dean at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. "There has been a disconnect between church male-dominated leadership and what happens in congregations. By bringing women into the realm of theological and biblical training, they are being brought into leadership levels in the church in all kinds of ways."

Tim Lind, church-to-church relations coordinator for MWC, agrees. "The fact that there is an agency in the global Anabaptist family that is dedicated to supporting women's theological studies in itself gives value to such women in the eyes of the churches and church leaders," he says. "Both for those churches that already support women in pastoral ministry and for those that do not yet, this is an encouragement.

"Many church leaders claim that they are not opposed to women's ordination and pastoral ministry roles but that there are few or no women with the educational qualifications. Mennonite Women USA support has helped remove this obstacle."

Linda Shelly, Mennonite Mission Network's director for mission relationships in Latin America, believes that the more women as well as men are encouraged to pursue God's call, the more the church will grow in its song of praise to God, the giver of all giftedness.

"The more that IWF encourages women, the more they are coming forth," she says. "And the more they are coming forth, the more opportunities we have to provide not only dollars but the solidarity of spirit that strengthens relationships and connections across the globe as both men and women pursue God's mission together."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for Mennonite Women USA*

At this church, service is 'part of the DNA'

Young adults at First Mennonite in Newton, Kan., supported in service.

Photo provided

Back row, from left: Ben Histand (MVS in San Francisco); Erin Regier (Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M.); Tim Regier (Radical Journey in Asunción, Paraguay); front row: Terra Wiens (MVS in Sioux Falls, S.D.); Joanna Epp (Radical Journey in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa); Bethanie Wedel (Service Adventure in Albany, Ore.); Abby Schrag (Service Adventure in Philippi, W.Va.).

At First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., young adults are lining up to do service. And this year is no exception. Three years ago, there were also eight from the church doing service, and although numbers vary from year to year, for many years the church has encouraged and sent their young adults on service assignments.

"It's been part of the DNA at First Mennonite," says Joel Schroeder, the church's youth pastor since 2004.

Schroeder and the young adults who are in service programs—Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS), Service Adventure and Radical Journey—say the key is the structure the church put into place to make sure youth had the information and resources they needed.

"All this summer, the Outreach Commission told me exactly when I should send out letters, what kinds of things I should say," says Sierra Pryce, who works with the Migrant Farmworkers Project through MVS in Kansas City, Mo. "Then all the money from my church congregation went straight to the Outreach Commission. It just made it so easy."

The Outreach Commission also helped participants plan a program to raise awareness within the congregation about their call to serve and to motivate congregational prayer and financial gifts. The participants shared both their service plans and their musical skills in an inspiring evening.

Linda Shelly, a member of the Outreach Commission, says the church makes sure money is not a roadblock.

"We plan up front that Outreach Commission is going to pay the whole amount one way or another," Shelly says. "This helps many people in the congregation contribute for the whole group, in ways that go beyond supporting relatives or close friends."

Young adults also have many opportunities to interact with current and former mission workers.

"We had people from the church who had done service after high school or college, and they'd come share their experience," says Abby Schrag, who is with Service Adventure in Philippi, W.Va. "So I was already thinking about doing service after my freshman year of high school."

For Erin Regier, who is in Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M., the presentation by two mission workers came at a time when she was trying to make her final decision about whether to go to Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., or head into Service Adventure. At the time, she says, she was afraid to plunge into the unknown.

"(The mission workers) talked about how we are only strangers to this earth and that heaven is our true home, so it was OK to feel uncomfortable," says Regier. "Afterward, my aunt also mentioned that often in this culture we are obsessed with being comfortable. She said that it was time that we get comfortable with being uncomfortable. At that point it was clear what God was calling me to do."

What advice do the young people have for churches who want their youth to do service after high school or college? Create the type of environment where service is valued and service opportunities are at the forefront. But don't be pushy. "I appreciated that I wasn't herded into it," Pryce says. "I didn't feel pressured to do MVS; it was something I was able to decide on my own."—*Andrew Clouse of MMN*

Canadians talk about sexuality issues

Mennonite Church Canada records over 750 comments now available online.

Mennonite Church Canada delegates responded to the Being a Faithful Church 3 (BFC 3) process with over 750 recorded comments at the 2011 Assembly in Waterloo, Ontario, in July.

The BFC process, introduced at the assembly in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 2009, was developed to help discern matters of faith and practice in response to difficult issues. The process is of particular importance when disagreement makes consensus difficult. BFC Part 3 addresses the scope of human sexuality, including homosexuality.

The 750 comments have been categorized along thematic lines. The top two comments demonstrate wide affirmation for the BFC 3 process under the leadership of the General Board and a commitment to Scripture study. Near the bottom of the list, respondents asked for help to define the criteria needed for weighing of Scripture and a desire to live the proclamation that the unity of the church is not humanity's doing but a gift of the Spirit.

Delegates cautioned leadership to avoid creating divisions, noting that there are already disagreements between generations and congregations on matters regarding non-heterosexual people. This fall the General Board will provide a tool for congregations to share how they already use Scripture for discernment on difficult matters. Go to www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1630 for delegate feedback. —*Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church Canada*

Dan Dyck

Naomi Unger (standing) leads a small group discussion on the Being a Faithful Church 3 process.

Everence

Simple steps, profound impact

When it comes to charitable giving, a few simple steps can make a world of difference. And now, Mennonite Foundation (an affiliate of Everence) has made it even easier, with our new donor advised fund. To learn more, visit Everence.com or talk to an Everence representative.

2111136

"God and Mammon: Reframing Stewardship Amidst Abundance, Scarcity and Conflict"

with Walter Brueggemann

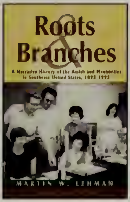
School for Leadership Training
Eastern Mennonite Seminary
January 16-18, 2012

Register online after Oct 1.
emu.edu/slt

Join us to discuss finances, faith and biblical stewardship.

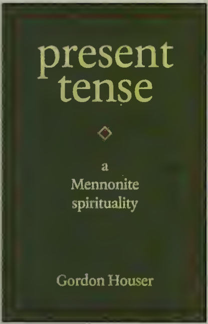
Eastern Mennonite Seminary
Harrisonburg, Va.

New from Cascadia Publishing House LLC



Roots and Branches: A Narrative History of the Amish and Mennonites in Southeast United States, 1892-1992, vol. 2, Martin W. Lehman. "This second volume . . . focuses on . . . what emerged as new people came to faith from traditionally non-Mennonite white, African-American, Hispanic, Garifuna, Haitian, and other origins. Today, over half of the Southeast Mennonite Conference congregations derive from these newer populations within the Mennonite faith family." —*James R. Krabill* 246p $21.95

Present Tense: A Mennonite Spirituality Gordon Houser explores the heart of Mennonite spirituality and how its spiritual practices may succeed or fall short.



" Houser's many years as an 'insider'—a church journalist—and 'outsider' —one who did not grow up Mennonite—render these reflections on Mennonite spirituality into a unique alloy of intimacy and objectivity." —*Valerie Weaver-Zercher*

"Houser has looked at the practices valued highly in his Mennonite community—patient following, peaceful reconciling, political integrity, playful relating, prayerful thinking, perfect imperfection and celebrating the present—and allowed them to be a mirror of his own life in the Spirit and as a member of 'the community of the Spirit.'" —*David Augsburger* 174p $16.95

Jesus Loves Women: A Memoir of Body and Spirit, Tricia Gates Brown. "Finally, the body is getting its due as the normal and gifted vehicle for Spirit! It has taken us a long time to realize the Christian obvious, and Brown is making it both more obvious and thoroughly Christian." —*Richard Rohr* 264 p $15.95

Cascadia

www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

MCC confronts drought

MCC continues response in East Africa.

Mennonite Central Committee's response to the drought and food crisis in East Africa continues to expand. Donations to MCC's drought response are enabling MCC to provide life-saving food vouchers, water and other support to tens of thousands of people in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia.

In Somalia many people have fled their homes to the safety of refugee camps near the northeastern Kenyan town of Dadaab. The camps, established in 1991 to accommodate about 90,000 people fleeing the ongoing conflict, are now home to more than 400,000 people, says Ron and Martha Ratzlaff of MCC. To improve educational opportunities for young people in the camps, MCC is sending 38,000 school kits to the Hagadera camp from its warehouses in Canada and the United States. The schools are operated by Lutheran World Federation. MCC is also sending 2,900 blankets and 500 sewing kits to the Hagadera camp and providing funds for the local purchase of 6,000 mosquito nets. In the Somali town of Dhobley, near the Kenya border, contributions to MCC are being used to provide emergency food assistance for new arrivals and their host families.—*MCC*

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2012 TOURS	2013 TOURS
AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15) JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29) VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18) EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31) ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR STEVE LANDIS (April 25-May 4) EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16) HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR to EUROPE (May 25-June 7) GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW and ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13) EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23) LANDS of the BIBLE: JORDAN and ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR TYLER HARTFORD (July 19-28) ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3) TOUR of LITHUANIA (in partnership with Lithuania Christian College International University) (September 12-19) MENNONITE STORY in POLAND and UKRAINE (September 18-29) MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA (October12-24) SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22) ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR KEITH BLANK (November 7-16) VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26) DANUBE CHRISTMAS MARKETS RIVER CRUISE (December 1-9)	AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21) CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 8-20) PANAMA CANAL CRUISE (February 26-March 8) MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26) EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17) GREAT TREK TOUR with JOHN SHARP (May 7-18) ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19) COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15) FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (July 22-31) THE BRITISH ISLES with DAVID and JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 13-25) MEDA in MOROCCO (October 11-22) BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (October 17-28) TOURMAGINATION DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP *"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."*

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

The Mennonite, Inc., board welcomes new members

Hears about board governance, affirms changes in magazine

The board of The Mennonite, Inc., welcomed two new members at its semiannual meeting Oct. 7-8 in Goshen, Ind. Steve Edwards of New Paris, Ind., was appointed by the delegates at Pittsburgh 2011.

Sheri Wenger of Lancaster, Pa., was appointed by the Executive Board in September. Board officers will remain the same, with Susan Sommer, Tremont, Ill., board chair; Gerald Mast, Bluffton, Ohio, vice chair; Barth Hague, Newton, Kan., secretary treasurer.

The primary agenda for the meeting was to review the philosophy by which the board governs its not-for-profit corporation called The Mennonite, Inc.

"Ten years ago," said Everett Thomas, editor and CEO, on Oct. 12 , "the board formally decided to use some ideas from the Carver model of policy governance. But no one on the board now was on the board then. With new board members joining, it seemed the right time to examine governance models again."

Rick Stiffney, CEO of MHS Alliance, provided a tutorial that illustrated several ways boards can govern, discussed the basic responsibilities of boards and reported on current trends in board governance.

The board agreed to work on three specific policy areas at its April 2012 meeting: (1) policy establishing its relationship with the Executive Board, (2) policy regarding an executive committee and (3) policy regarding leadership transition (succession planning).

The editorial staff of the magazine *The Mennonite* brought a suggestion to the board that the number of pages in each monthly issue be changed from 64 to 56. The change will offset paper and postage price increases coming in January. The board affirmed this move, with several members saying they had received feedback that the current format is already too long.

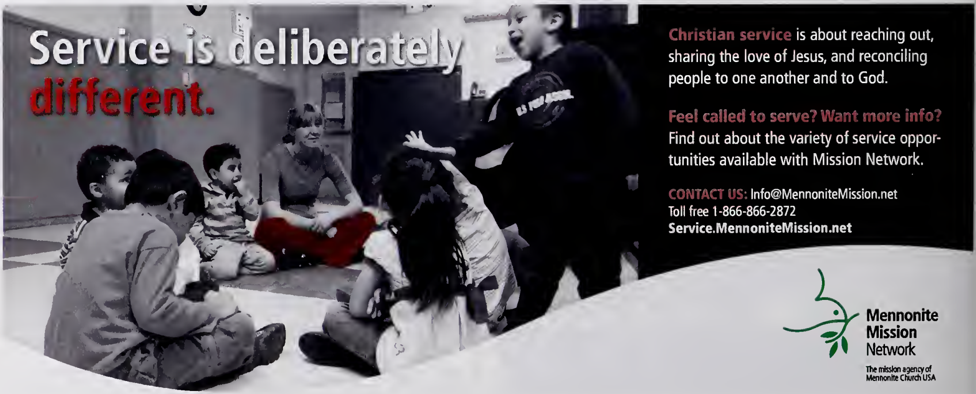
"We will discontinue the poetry page, four pages from the features section, one page from the news section and the two pages for the crossword puzzle," Thomas said. "We also plan to discontinue the Real Families column and dedicate a new page to global Anabaptism."

Thomas presented financial figures through August, which showed contributions approximately $5,000 ahead of August 2010, while advertising income was down more than $8,000 for the same period. Thomas recommended no cost-of-living increase for staff in 2012, and the board agreed. One future expense will be an increase in rent when the Goshen staff move to the new Mennonite Church USA building in Elkhart, Ind. The board also counseled against a staff proposal to generate new revenue by making *TMail*, a free, weekly electronic magazine (ezine), into a paid periodical.

The board's audit committee presented the 2010 Form 990, required by the Internal Revenue Service, and authorized staff to get quotes for the preparation of this annual form and tax returns for 2011.

The Mennonite uses a volunteer to analyze the magazine's content, marking articles according to how they reinforce the priorities of Mennonite Church USA. The board discussed whether to add to the earlier list of four priorities, since Mennonite Church USA has now adopted three more. There was general consensus to move to using the seven priorities rather than just the previous four.

The board meets next in April 2012 in Elkhart during the all-boards meeting.—*Gordon Houser*


Service is deliberately different.

Christian service is about reaching out, sharing the love of Jesus, and reconciling people to one another and to God.

Feel called to serve? Want more info?
Find out about the variety of service opportunities available with Mission Network.

CONTACT US: Info@MennoniteMission.net
Toll free 1-866-866-2872
Service.MennoniteMission.net

Mennonite
Mission
Network
The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

WORKERS

Harms, Dawn Yoder, began a term as intentional interim pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Horst, Carmen, was licensed as associate pastor at James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Sept. 25.

Nissley, Amy, ended a term as associate pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

OBITUARIES

Althaus, Larry Ned, 72, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 20. Spouse: Patricia Drury Althaus. Parents: Henry and Gertrude Diller Althaus. Children: Jeffrey, Randall, Annette Heslep; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Basinger, Lowell Eugene, 92, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 1. Spouse: Lola Schertz Basinger. Parents: Daniel J. and Elizabeth Bixel Basinger. Children: Douglas, Deborah Stechschulte, Jerome; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 7 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Bender, Delmar I., 92, Johnson County, Iowa, died Oct. 3. Spouse: Goldie J. Miller Bender (deceased). Parents: Irving and Ethel Yoder Bender. Children: John, Alice Golden, Virginia Rew, Les, Laurie Bender; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Blosser, Matthew John, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Hesston, Kan., died July 15. Parents: John and Janlee Ruth Blosser and stepmother Beck Unternahrer. Children: Baiden Janlee Blosser, Emily Rose Blosser. Memorial service: Nov. 5 at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Boller, Leona Gingerich, 88, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 9. Spouse: Martin Boller (deceased). Parents: Joseph P. and Lula Stutzman Gingerich. Children: James, Arnold, Emma Lou Miller; 11 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Brubaker, Frances Elizabeth, 79, Wadsworth, Ohio, died June 19 of sudden cardiac arrest. Parents: Elam Abram and Sara Marian Auker Brubaker. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Dick, Kenneth James, 80, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 8. Spouse: Wilma Friesen Dick. Parents: Abe and Kathryn Goossen Dick. Children: Kerry, Darla Cleveland, Mark, Jamie; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Dillman, Diana G. Cole, 64, Bluffton, Ohio, died June 28. Spouse: James Dillman. Parents: Cecil "Pete Walters and Elizabeth Robinson Cole. Funeral: July 2 at Chiles and Sons Laman Funeral Home, Bluffton.

Dye, Alice Louise Shenk, 92, Mesa, Ariz., died Sept. 10. Parents: Jacob and Laura King Shenk. Children: Carolyn Dye-Marquand, Wes, Jim; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Mariposa Gardens Cemetery Chapel, Mesa.

Ens, Abram, 78, St. Jacobs, Ontario, died Sept. 26. Spouse: Susanne Neufeld Ens. Parents: Abram and Maria Redekopp Ens. Children: Alfred, Gerhard, Heidi Wiens, Hermann, Karin Koehler; 14 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Freed, Dorothy F. Hagey, 86. Franconia Township, Pa., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Russell L. Freed. Parents: Abram G. and Mary Freed Hagey. Child: Arlin; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Peter Becker Community Chapel, Harleysville, Pa.

Grieser, Geraldine "Geri" B. Noland, 92, Paxton, Ill., Sept. 20. Spouse: Roy E. Grieser (deceased). Parents: Oscar A. and Britha Gustava Thompson Noland. Children: Stanley, Marlene Stalter, Patricia Grace, Stephen; 12 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

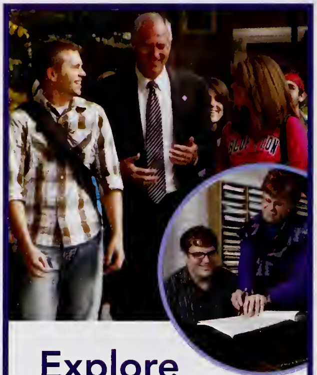
Grieser, Kathryn Anna Wyse, 90, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 28. Spouse: Ivan Grieser (deceased). Parents: Clarence and Ella Roth Wyse. Children: Mary Grieser Prather, Dan, Elizabeth Grieser Miller, Tim, Anne Rex, David; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Horst, Laurence, 96, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 7. Spouse: Marian Messner Horst. Parents: Jacob and Anna Grabill Beck Horst. Child: Ramona Bailey; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 10 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Janzen, Doris, 82, Goessel, Kan., died Sept. 4. Parents: Benjamin and Elizabeth Unruh Janzen. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Bethesda Home Chapel, Goessel.

Johns, Jean M. Shore, 57, Hatfield, Pa., died Sept. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Edward Johns. Parents: Morris and Bettina "Bettie" Benn Shore. Children: Eric C., Keith E. Funeral: Oct. 9 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.



Explore Academics @Bluffton

Friday, Nov. 11, 2011
- Criminal justice
- Dietetics
- Mathematics
- Psychology
- Public health
- Science and pre-med
- Social work

Friday, Dec. 2, 2011
- Business
- Education
- Fashion and interior design
- Health, fitness and exercise science
- Information technology
- Sports and recreation management

Learn about all of Bluffton's programs @ www.bluffton.edu/academiclife/majors/

BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY

Register one week prior to event at:
1.800.488.3257, Option 1
www.bluffton.edu/admission/visit/explore/

Juhnke, Quinton A., 91, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 9. Spouse: Ella Stucky Juhnke. Parents: Karl and Katherina Goering Juhnke. Children: Dwayne, Stanley, Carlene Postier; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Kanagy, Irene Julia, 61, Indianapolis, Ind., died Aug. 15, of cancer. Parents: Norman Beachy Kanagy and Rachel Byler Kanagy. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Shalom Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Kaufman, Delbert, 87, Marion, S.D., died Sept. 30. Spouse: Dolores Graber Kaufman. Parents: Leon and Lena Waltner Kaufman. Children: Kathy Kleinsasser, Arden, Judith Kaufman. Funeral: Oct. 4 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Kliewer, Albert A., 75, Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 20. Spouse: Jennie Peters Kliewer. Spouse: Rachel Siebert Kliewer (deceased). Parents: John A. and Agatha Ratzlaff Kliewer. Children: Steve, Mark, Bryan; six grandchildren. Step-children: Becky Voth, Denise Critchfield, Tammy Peters; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Martin, Eber, 93, Columbiana, Ohio, died Sept. 20. Spouse: Della Lapp Martin (deceased). Parents: Stephen R. and Catherine Lehman Martin. Children: Brenda Graybill, Roger, Byron, Ward; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Martin, Harold, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 19. Spouse: Ellen Risser Martin (deceased). Parents: Leroy and Ida Martin. Children: Daniel, Jason; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Nice, Evelyn H., 60, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 2, of brain cancer. Parents: Elmer C. and Alma L. Heckler Nice. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Nafziger, Eldon Dean, 79, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 6 of a brain hemorrhage. Spouse: Laverne Vogt Nafziger. Parents: Eldon R. and Sadie Sutter Nafziger. Children: Lee Ann Ewert, Donna Suter, Eric, Tim; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 8 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind., and Hopedale Mennonite Church, Hopedale, Ill.

Nyce, Robert Wynne, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 28. Spouse: Ruth Yoder Nyce. Parents: Wynne J. and Grace Nice Nyce. Children: Karen Stuckey, Richard, Susan Stiffney, Phil; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Redekop, Freda Pellman, 81, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 8. Spouse: Calvin Redekop. Parents: LeRoy and Elizabeth Lauver Pellman. Children: William, Benjamin, Frederick; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 10 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Sala, Ray, 85, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 4. Spouse: Romaine Stahl Sala (deceased). Parents: George and Annie Thomas Sala. Funeral: Sept. 10 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Schmidt, Dannie, 91, Goessel, Kan., died June 26. Spouse: Alice Funk Schmidt. Parents: H. J. S. and Sara Schroeder Schmidt. Children: Cheryl Brunner, Dwayne, Lynette Johnston; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Schmitt, Howard S., 77, Plain City, Ohio, died Sept. 15, of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: D. Jean West Schmitt. Parents: Delton and Beulah Weber Schmitt. Children: Valerie Jones, Jeffrey. Funeral: Sept. 24 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Selzer, Lahla Ursula Miller, 99, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Truman Selzer (deceased). Parents: S. Enos and Ursula Miller. Children: Priscilla Boschmann, Wendell, David, Harvey; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Siebert, Steven, 61, Henderson, Neb., Aug. 31, from injuries sustained in an accident. Spouse: Margie Pfile Siebert. Parents: Raymond and Mable Siebert. Children: Tara Swartzendruber, Chad; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Sonnenberg, Nellie Elizabeth Bragg, 87, Denver, Colo., died Sept. 6. Spouse: Arlo E. Sonnenberg. Children: Robert, Allen, Darin. Funeral: Sept. 17 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Springer, Roy D., 96, Fisher, Ill., died Oct. 7. Spouse: Edna Sutter Springer. Parents: David V. and Lena Birkey Springer. Children: Carol Rhodes, Royal, Keith, Mark; 10 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Stalter, Glenn E., 91, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 16. Spouse: Marion Shaefer Stalter. Parents: William and Edna Yordy Stalter. Children: Robert, Gregory; two grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. The family will hold a private service.

Steider, Kenneth Waldean, 85, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 15. Parents: Lee and Emma Saltzman Steider. Memorial service: Oct. 7 at Schowalter Villa, Shickley, Neb.

Stoltzfus, Daniel Harold, MBA, MTh, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 14, six weeks after being diagnosed with a brain tumor. Spouse: Rosalie Garber Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Daniel D. and Martha Barbe Stoltzfus. Children: Pricilla Dawn Trinkley, Jane Ellen Buller, Jean Helen Martin, Danile Rose Martens, Miriam Faye DeShield, Lois Renee Mast, Lloyd Daniel; 17 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Stutzman, Edna E. Hoffman, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 23. Spouse: Clem Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Carl and Ida Wesner Hoffman. Children: Betty Miller, Beverly Snyder, Jonathan, Eugene, Benjamin; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Troyer, Eleanor E. Stutzman, 88, Milford, Neb., died Sept. 9 of kidney failure. Spouse: Leonard E. Troyer (deceased). Parents: Fred and Agnes M. Bender Stutzman. Children: Pam Erb, Terry, Karen Barker, Tom, Tim; 15 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Troyer, Frederick "Fred," 87, Elida, Ohio, died Sept. 20. Spouse: Edith Wendling Troyer. Parents: Menno and Elizabeth Good Troyer. Children: Glenn, Galen, Karen Miller, Cindy Hartman, Marc; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida.

Waltner, Mabel Fliginger, 88, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 28. Spouse: Johnny H. Waltner (deceased). Parents: Peter and Minnie Downer Fliginger. Children: Shirley Preheim, Loren, Roger, Rodney; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Weaver, Susan K. Hawkins, 66, Shreve, Ohio, died July 17. Spouse: Roy Weaver. Parents: Lloyd and Rose Taylor Hawkins. Children: Jennifer Yoder, Kimberly Weaver; three grandchildren. Funeral: July 21 at Wooster Mennonite Church, Wooster, Ohio.

Wyse, Paul E., 76. Wauseon, Ohio, died Sept. 18. Parents: Ira and Mabel Mull Wyse. Funeral: Sept. 21 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold, Ohio.

Music from Third Way Media

A CAPPELLA
CHRISTMAS

The Mennonite Hour Collection

For Christmas, why not select a few CDs for your family and friends?

A cappella music from the former *Mennonite Hour* radio program. Choose from sixteen albums that were digitally re-mastered from archival recordings.

For more information on each CD, including a list of songs, go to **store.ThirdWayMedia.org.** Quantity discounts available.

$12.95 USD/$14.89 CAD

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Third Way Media is the media outlet of MennoMedia.

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

TM DIGITAL EDITION

Available digitally

The Mennonite is now available in a **digital edition** you can read on your computer screen or tablet.

To sign up, e-mail **editor@themennonite.org** or call **800-790-2498.**

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
The journey of
John Powell
mission advocate
for Mennonite
Mission Network
November 2011

RESOURCES

Johann: A Novel by Everett J. Thomas (Woodgate Pond Publishing, 2011, $8.95) tells the story of 8-year-old Johann Thomas and his family, who arrive in Pennsylvania in 1747 at the end of a 60-year period when the Friends legislated pacifism toward Native Americans as official state policy. This historical fiction describes what life might have been like for Johann and other Mennonites over the next decade as the French and Indian War unfolds around them. Order from amazon.com.

Howard Raid: A Man of Faith and Vision by Elizabeth Raid (Pandora Press, 2011, $21.95) is a biography of a college, church and community leader who brought to the classroom not only academic credentials but those of a business-tested entrepreneur.

The End of War by John Horgan (McSweeneys, 2011, $22) applies the scientific method to war and argues that, biologically speaking, humans are just as likely to be peaceful as to be violent. War is not preordained, writes Horgan, a science journalist, and should be thought of as a solvable, scientific problem—like curing cancer.

The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls Us Home by Mary Jo Leddy (Orbis Books, 2011, $20) describes how the newcomer disrupts our lives and summons us to a new sense of ourselves, a fresh sense of Christ and a compelling vision of the church. The stranger calls us to live beyond the false sense of identity that is generated within an imperial culture.

The "Ideal" Couple: The Shadow Side of Marriage by Marilyn J. Minter Wolgemuth and J. Carl Wolgemuth with Laurie Oswald Robinson (Cascadia Publishing House, 2011, $14.95) candidly shares the marital dysfunction the Wolgemuths experienced due to Carl's strong attractions to men he had not shared before marriage. Two wounded souls describe how they developed a friendship, married and maintained an outward image of blissful normalcy yet inwardly experienced a painful and unusual marital relationship.

The Jesus Factor in Justice and Peacemaking by C. Norman Kraus (Cascadia Publishing House, 2011, $12.95) addresses the impact of Jesus on the practice of conflict resolution interventions, such as restorative justice, peacebuilding, mediation, and trauma healing.

Jesus Loves Women: A Memoir of Body and Spirit by Tricia Gates Brown (Cascadia Publishing House, 2011, $15.95) is the memoir of a girl raised in a fundamentalist Christian milieu she casts off at a young age and of her quest to find wholeness and home, spiritually and sexually.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

I	O	C	H	E	θ	E	O	■	M	O	S	E	S
O	■	O	■	L	■	■	O	■	T	■	A	■	H
S	T	M	E	O	N	■	G	A	O	■	N	■	A
E	■	M	■	O	■	■	■	M	I	G	O	O	E
R	E	A	G	U	E	S	■	R	A	N	■	■	T
H	■	N	■	E	■	■	C	A	N	A	A	N	■
■	■	O	■	N	U	N	■	M	■	T	■	T	■
E	T	M	I	T	S	■	M	■	■	S	E	N	O
A	■	E	■	■	E	G	Y	R	T	■	■	T	■
M	A	N	N	A	■	O	■	I	A	M	W	H	O
θ	■	I	■	R	■	O	■	T	R	U	E	■	A
■	A	S	H	E	R	■	■	C	■	T	■	■	T
■	M	■	■	A	■	A	S	H	■	E	A	C	H

Little Eden Camp, situated in beautiful NW Michigan, is seeking a qualified candidate for the position of ***executive director***. This is a year-round position that includes comprehensive benefits. Qualified individuals should submit their resume by Nov. 15 to David Birky, 307 W Kercher, Goshen, IN 46526 or e-mail davidb@interracu.com.

The **Gather 'Round** curriculum, produced by MennoMedia and Brethren Press, is accepting applications to ***write for preschool, primary, middler, multiage, junior youth or youth age groups*** for 2013-14. Writers produce well-written, age-appropriate and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books and resource packs. All writers will attend an orientation March 19-23, 2012, in Chicago. See Job Opportunities at www.gatherround.org. Application deadline: Jan. 9, 2012.

Peace resources
Fall devotional is here!

Seasoned with Peace
Fall
Spring

Books include devotions, prayers, sayings, recipes, Bible verses, comic strips, practical tips, and much more for the life of a peacemaker.

Now $15.95 each
at bookstores and at:
www.seasonedwithpeace.com

Profits support Mennonite peace and justice work.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

Eastern Mennonite School is seeking ***instructional and administrative leadership*** for our middle and high school, effective July/August 2012. Principal positions serve as support and supervisor for faculty, school advocate and communicator with the parent community and oversee student life and co-curricular programming. Interested candidates may request a full job description and application by e-mailing leamanp@emhs.net or calling 540-236-6012. Applications are being accepted up through Nov. 15. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Lacey Spring, Va., a growing congregation of approximately 250, is a community-oriented church seeking a ***half-time youth pastor***. Contact gracemennonite@comcast.net or 540-442-6235 for full job description. Conducting interviews immediately.

Pastoral opportunities/Oportunidades pastorales at **First Mennonite Church / Primera Iglesia Menonita**, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. In 2013, our multicultural congregation will celebrate 200 years of witness in our community. We currently offer weekly services in English on Sunday morning and in Spanish on Saturday evening. Following the past two years of spiritual reflection and discussion, our 284 members are looking forward to the future with renewed focus and enthusiasm for God's leading. We anticipate a three-person pastoral team (2.5 FTE), committed to an Anabaptist theology and practice, will guide us in the coming years in the following roles: lead pastor (1 FTE), Hispanic ministry pastor (.75 FTE, bilingual in Spanish and English), worship planning and music pastor (.5 FTE for Sunday service), youth ministry (.25 FTE). We invite applications for these roles and are open to various combinations of gifts. To explore these opportunities further, additional information and detailed job descriptions for each position can be found at http://www.firstmennonitekitchener.ca/inquiries. Letters of intent may be directed to the pastoral search committee at pastoralsearch@firstmennonitekitchener.ca. Interested candidates will be processed through Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener ON N2P 2G2. Phone 519-650-3806/800-206-9356, fax 519-650-3947 and e-mail mbechtel@mcec.ca. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications in January 2012. El Comité de Búsqueda iniciará la revisión de las solicitudes a partir de enero del 2012.

Preemptive walls

Jon Heinly is youth minister for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and Lancaster Mennonite School.

As a pacifist Christian and U.S. citizen, I am troubled by my country's military campaigns, but our preemptive strikes are particularly disturbing. If we are going to be involved in warfare, couldn't we at least wait and respond out of self-defense rather than bringing aggression based on so-called intelligence or even assumptions?

In relationships, whether national or personal, a preemptive move reveals a particular posture in relation to the other. Sadly, we are too often guilty of a similar posture within the church. While not guilty of launching preemptive missiles, we respond to the other by building preemptive walls.

Let me give two personal examples of preemptive walls.

When I was in college, my mentor and adviser strongly encouraged me to take a summer internship with a wealthy Methodist church on St. Simons Island, Ga. I trusted him enough to go, and the experience formed me by forcing me to reckon with preemptive walls in my life. There were walls I put up between myself and wealthy Christians because I struggled to know how they could live faithfully a life of Christian discipleship while maintaining a standard of living much higher than my own. I put up walls between me and these Christians who organized patriotic church services for the Fourth of July and for the return of a church member finishing a tour of duty in the armed forces. Throughout the summer, I found myself needing to disassemble these walls I had erected—walls built on assumptions I'd made about these people based on our differences. I built walls before I knew them and needed to remove the same walls before I could form deep relationships with people in that community. By the end of the summer, I was grateful for all I learned from people from whom I had initially separated myself.

I was grateful for all I learned from people from whom I had initially separated myself.

I've also constructed preemptive walls outside the confines of a church building. When my wife and I moved from Harrisburg to Lancaster, Pa., we expected to experience much of the same demographic makeup in our new neighborhood. Instead of the rich racial and ethnic diversity we were accustomed to, we found ourselves in a much different place. Unlike in our old neighborhood, we shared a common skin color with almost all our new neighbors, but we discovered that our new community was quite different from us in many ways. Our new community had a lot of NASCAR-watching, cigarette-smoking, motorcycle-riding Pittsburg Steelers fans, and I am a non-NASCAR-watching, nonsmoking, compact car-driving Philadelphia Eagles fan. I had hoped to form positive relationships with my new neighbors, but my preemptive walls went up quickly. In fact, we caught ourselves bemoaning the fact that we had not done better research before moving into the area. With the help of a couple of big snowstorms that required a lot of block teamwork, my preemptive walls began coming down. Now I value my relationships with my neighbors and consider them friends, recognizing the foolishness of my initial response. Instead of being people from whom I wish to remain separated, my neighbors are overwhelmingly generous and compassionate people who, like me, have their own strengths and weaknesses.

I don't assume that everyone throws up preemptive walls in response to patriotic Methodists or Pittsburgh Steelers fans on motorcycles, but a moment of introspection leads us to recognize our own shortcomings in this area. Adjectives such as atheist, fundamentalist, liberal, conservative, pro-life, pro-choice, gay, homophobe, Catholic, Protestant, modern, postmodern, undocumented, Tea Party, universalist or evangelical may be the trigger for us to start our preemptive construction project. These labels may be based on our own assumptions, or they may even be how others describe themselves, but the end result is a wall separating me from someone else, a wall built before I've even taken a chance to know this person for who she or he really is.

By now you may recognize that my "preemptive walls" are essentially another term for prejudice. You're right, but I think this term is still helpful. We tend to get into a narrow focus when thinking of prejudice, and maybe a new term can break us out and allow us to see how often we really respond to people in this way throughout our daily lives.

I may not be able to get the U.S. government to refrain from preemptive military strikes. But can I, along with my sisters and brothers throughout Mennonite Church USA, refrain from building preemptive walls that separate us from other people? I hope so. TM

FILM REVIEWS

Moneyball (PG-13) tells the true story of Oakland A's general manager Billy Beane's successful attempt to put together a baseball club on a small budget by employing computer-generated analysis to draft his players. Though he does not reach his goal of winning the World Series, he helps change the way baseball is approached. The film asks what we devote our lives to and why. The final scene, with Beane listening to a song performed by his daughter, caps this theme with the phrase "enjoy the show." A good message for all of us, baseball fans or not.—*Gordon Houser*

Contagion (PG-13) is a thriller about the spread of a deadly disease and the panic that ensues. An international team of doctors contracted by the Center for Disease Control deals with the outbreak. Director Steven Soderbergh tracks the progress of the disease and the CDC's attempt to identify the virus in order to find a cure. The film moves quickly as suspense builds. It presents ethical dilemmas people face about access to information or medicines. While this is fiction, it could happen. (See Miscellany, page 10.)—*gh*

Higher Ground (R) is perhaps the first film since *The Apostle* to portray a fundamentalist Christian group with honesty and respect, neither preaching a point nor holding it up for ridicule. Vera Farmiga, who directed the film, is magnificent in the lead role of a woman who embraces faith, then experiences ambivalence, leading her to question what she's been taught. The portrayal of her group could have been more nuanced, but the film tells an engaging story of faith.—*gh*

Restless (PG-13) tells the story of a terminally ill teenage girl who falls for a boy who attends funerals. He lost his parents and nearly died himself in a car accident and talks with the ghost of a Japanese kamikaze pilot from World War II. The teenagers' quirky relationship makes the focus on death and dying less maudlin. This jaunty film depicts the relish of being alive, though it ignores the Source of that life.—*gh*

Books on justice, work, Jesus, Islam

As Christmas season approaches, you may want to consider books as gifts—to others or for yourself. Here are some recent ones worth considering.

Justice in Love by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Eerdmans, 2011, $35) addresses an important topic for Christians. While many oppose justice and love, Wolterstorff, an eminent Christian philosopher, shows that these two concepts, when understood properly, are perfectly compatible. "Doing justice is an example of love," he writes.

Wolterstorff is thorough in his argument, yet uses easy-to-follow examples to illustrate his points. This is not an easy read, but it is worth the effort.

Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor by Ben Witherington III (Eerdmans, 2011, $18) considers work from a biblical point of view as calling, ministry, a way to make a living and as culture making.

"Our work does not bestow on us our humanity," he writes, "but it is the way we can express in a useful manner our likeness to God as creators, sustainers, redeemers."

Jesus, Paul and the Gospels by James D.G. Dunn (Eerdmans, 2011, $21) offers an accessible introduction to basic issues in the study of the New Testament. Based on three sets of lectures Dunn gave to Catholic and Jewish audiences in Italy, Spain and Israel, the book is designed for readers from various religious backgrounds.

Dunn draws on studies of oral tradition, including his book *Jesus Remembered* (Eerdmans, 2003), to address such questions as where, why and how the Gospels were written and what we should respect from them.

He goes on to explore the relationship between Jesus' proclamation and the Apostle Paul's proclamation and how to bridge the two.

Finally, he draws lessons on the significance of Paul's teaching for the church today. Dunn writes: "If Christians could recapture the full sweep of Paul's Trinitarian ecclesiology, it would save them from many of their traditional failings."

Given that Islam is such a fast-growing religion and increasingly influential on the world scene, understanding it better is important. Two recent books help us in that regard: *Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith*, edited by Roger Allen and Shawkat M. Toorawa (Eerdmans, 2011, $20), and *Who Is My Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face About Islam—and Themselves* by Lee C. Camp (Brazos Press, 2011, $17.99).

Islam collects 15 essays, each by a different expert in the field, on the major aspects of Islam. Chapters cover such topics as Islam, Qur'an, Muhammad, Shariʻa and address interactions between Islam and women, Judaism and Christianity.

Toorwa addresses our ignorance when he writes: "The assumption that an elementary school teacher in Nigeria, an actress in Canada, a shopkeeper in Pakistan, a nurse in Baghdad, an architect in Indonesia, a combatant in Guantanamo and a criminal anywhere have a single *Muslim* view of the world is a *seriously* flawed one."

Camp combines personal storytelling with summaries and analysis of Christian and Islamic teaching about war. Many Mennonites will be familiar with what he says about Christian attitudes toward war but not with his nuanced description of Islamic teaching.

Camp writes that while "the founding narratives of Christianity and Islam are different, ... the Christian mainstream looks more like the Muhammad story than the Jesus story."

I resonated with his chapter on Muslim hospitality.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

SEPTEMBER 2011 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

These readers submitted answers

Ruby Bontrager, Bristol, Ind.
Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Eleanor Buskirk, Petoskey, Mich.
Lois Copeland, Elyria, Ohio
Lester Denlinger, Willow Street, Pa.
Lois A. Deter, Sterling, Ill.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Ginny Doehrmann, Stryker, Ohio
Orlin Eigsti, Hesston, Kan.
Jean E. Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Earl Frankenfield, Harleysville, Pa.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Sarah Glick, Belleville, Pa.
Jerry Graber, Parker, S.D.
Faye Grater, Wauseon, Ohio
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Helene Hoover, Elkhart, Ind.
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Rod Huebert, Moundridge, Kan.
Donald King, Goshen, Ind.
Mabel Kurtz, New Holland, Pa.
Faye I. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.
Ethel Lehman, Columbiana, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Julia Liechty, Berne, Ind.
Loveda Liechty, Archbold, Ohio
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Art Martin, Goshen, Ind.
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Richard Neiswander, Richmond, Va.
Jerry Newcomer, Seville, Ohio
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Mary R. Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio
Edna Otto, Leonard, Mo.
Mary Rhoade, Goshen, Ind.
Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Harlo Schmidt, Buhler, Kan.
Helen Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Wilbert Schmidt, Goessel, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Esther Shawn, Engadine, Mich.
Jan Shelman, Winfield, Iowa
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Alma Shultz, Lancaster, Pa.
Anna Smucker, Goshen, Ind.
Alice Souder, Grottoes, Va.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Florence Stauffer-Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.
Ruth W. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa.
Bonnie Stuckey, West Unity, Ohio
Gabriel Stuckey, Westover, Md.
Beulah Swartzendruber, Wayland, Iowa
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Bob & Anna Mae Weaver, Lancaster, Pa.
Sam & Sarah Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.
Elizabeth Wenger, Ephrata, Pa.
Lois Whisler, Hanover, Pa.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Mike Wilson, Petoskey, Mich.
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Esther Yoder, Goshen, Ind.
Lois Yoder, Huntington, Pa.
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Marvin & Florence Zehr, Manson, Iowa
Pearl E. Zehr, New Wilmington, Pa.

$50 awarded to the winner of each category
2012 Photo Contest
Boldly embody the love of Jesus
A call to worship and witness
Worship*: Todd Hanson
June 2011 issue
Nature*: Erika Ressler
Sept.2011 issue
Work, Service, Play*: Todd Widmer
Oct. 2011 issue
50mm 1:1.8

Submit your photos to *The Mennonite's* 2012 photo contest.

Your work may be chosen for future publication in *The Mennonite.* For submission instructions and photo categories, go to www.themennonite.org/issues/14-11/articles/Photo_Contest_2012. Submission deadline: January 31, 2012.

* Photo shown as it appeared in print

The Exodus

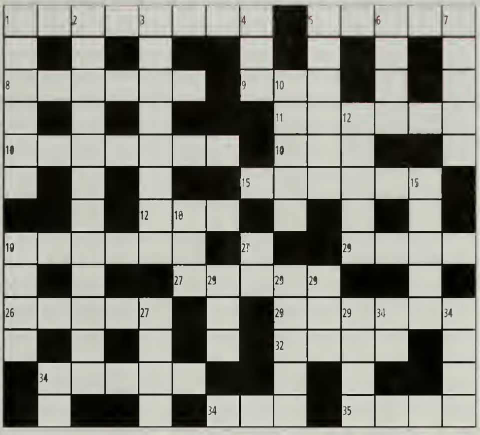
By Jeanette Baer Showalter

ACROSS

1. Mother of Moses.
5. His face was radiant when he came down from Mount Sinai.
8. One of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt.
9. Another one of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt.
11. The Israelites camped near Pi Hahiroth between ____ and the sea (14:2).
13. God sent 10 of these afflictions on Egypt.
14. Moses threw the staff on the ground "and it became a snake, and he ___ from it" (4:3).
15. "I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of ___ ..." (6:4).
17. Moses' young aide, Joshua, was the son of ___ .
19. "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai ... 'Put ___ around the mountain and set it apart as holy'" (19:23).
21. "But Moses said, 'O Lord, please ___ someone else to do it.'"
22. Land of the pharaohs.
26. Food provided to the Israelites by God.
28. "God said to Moses, '__ __ __ I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I am has sent me to you'" (3:14)(3 words).
32. True or false: Moses was of the family of Levi.
33. Another of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt.
34. The tabernacle altar tools were made of bronze, even the pots to remove the ___ (singular) (27:3).
35. Moses tells the Israelites about the manna and said "___ one is to gather as much as he needs ..." (16:16).

DOWN

1. When the Israelites left Egypt, they took the bones of ___ with them (Ex. 13:19).
2. These were given to Moses on Mount Sinai.
3. Moses complained to God: "O Lord, I have never been ___ ... I am slow of speech and tongue" (4:10).
4. "But among the Israelites not a ___ will bark at any man or animal" (11:7).
5. Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, was the priest of ___ (3:1).
6. Moses killed a cruel Egyptian and hid the body in the ___ (2:12).
7. "Thou ___ have no other gods before me" (KJV).
10. "___ married his father's sister, Jochebed, who bore him Aaron and Moses" (6:20).
12. The third plague involved these insects, though some versions call them lice.
16. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" is the ___ commandment.
18. The altar should be built with uncut stones, "for you will defile it if you __ a tool on it." (20:25).
19. The Passover ___ (12:21).
20. "Let __ people go."



23. Horeb is called the "mountain of ___." (3:1).
24. The papyrus basket for baby Moses was covered with these two substances. Name one for 24 Down and the other for 25 Down (2:3).
25. See 24 Down.
27. The locusts "invaded all Egypt and settled down in every ___ of the country ..."(10:14).
29. The Lord asked the reluctant Moses, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or ___?" (4:11)
30. The Israelites said, "__ will do everything the Lord has said ..." (24:7).
31. God sent the Israelites to the land he "promised on ___ to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ..." (33:1).
33. YHWH, Yahweh, Jehovah means "he is" or "I ___." (3:14).

One more puzzle

The December issue of *The Mennonite* will have the last crossword puzzle (see article on page 52). We also will discontinue publishing the names of those who submit the puzzle. answers Therefore, we are providing no form in this issue to submit answers to this month's puzzles for the January issue of *The Mennonite*. The answers to this month's puzzle are on page 57.

(Continued from page 5)

ships and to connect to God's mission in the world. We do not need "agreement on what Mennonite Church USA statements mean—and what they don't mean"; we need faithful living, community discernment and hundreds of ways to live out our faith and our statements.

When one congregation and one area conference discern that faithfulness, it is up to the entire community to listen and to agree and disagree in love. For example, my own ordination was wracked with controversy and disagreement. Now, after nearly 30 years of professional, active ministry, I know that we will never reach agreement among the body—the Mennonite church—even though the confession of faith is clear about our current understanding that God calls women and men to leadership. That's faithful, and the disagreement is not mischief. *—Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Newton, Kan.*

Regarding the editorial in the October issue: Mennonite Church USA came about through the merger of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church denominations, denominations that had significantly different understandings of church polity, especially with regard to discipline.

One saw discipline as an important function of conferences; the other saw discipline as a congregational matter and conferences as existing primarily to help congregations do together what they could not do individually.

Since we all understood this difference before the merger, I thought we all assumed both traditions would be part of the new denomination. That is, that the new denomination would indeed be a large tent that recognized both traditions.

Thus it seems strange to read in an editorial in *The Mennonite* that "this difference creates mischief."

Are we now being told that Mennonite Church USA must recognize only one of these understandings? If this had been clear before the merger, I doubt if it would have passed. I do know that I would never have voted for it.*—Robert L. Ramseyer, Bluffton, Ohio*

Rejects dichotomy

The correct answer to Eugene Souder's "Is Peace on Earth our Highest Calling?" may well be a resounding "yes." Surely the angels in Luke 2:14 were not bringing the good news to some and excluding others: "And on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (NIV) is the news that God is favoring all people with a great cosmic breakthrough—God becoming flesh, a baby born.

Later, Jesus in teaching us to pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is certainly praying for a peaceable kingdom on earth.

This peace that we pray and act for is much more than the absence of warfare. This peace, this shalom, on earth is the fruit of our relationship and partnering with the Prince of Peace—our God of boundless love, compassion and reconciliation—who is not willing that any should perish but that all should have food, water, shelter, clothing and a dignity commensurate with one created in the image of God.

While God's peaceable kingdom may not reach full blossom until the eschaton, I reject the dichotomy that sees "peace on earth" as a political entity, only moderately good, and "peace in individual hearts" as the ultimate good. The God of peace, Jesus the Christ, encompasses both.*—John Asa Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Mennonite donor organization

The purpose of this letter is to explore ways that we as Mennonites can help one another in need of organ donors. Mennonites do so much to help others, there must be a way to help each other.

Is there a Mennonite-sponsored donor organization or could there be? I hope this will spark the interest of someone who has the knowledge to develop such an organization.

I am looking for a kidney, not for me but for a dear friend whose kidneys failed due to polycystic kidney disease. If you would be a donor with blood type "O," please contact the donor transplant coordinator at the HCMC Transplant Clinic in Minneapolis, Eugenia Steffens, at 612-873-7705. I would be willing to trade my kidney to someone who could organize a swap for my friend. Can you help?*—Carol Shelly, Excelsior, Minn.*

Social media creates challenges

I greatly appreciated Anna Groff's September editorial on social media. It is a much-needed conversation that has to go deeper than the questions you hear most often.

Our congregation uses Twitter, has a website, uses Mail Chimp for our e-Weekly newsletter and uses e-mail as the primary method of congregational communication between Sundays and between meetings for our ministry teams.

The challenge is the occasional member who doesn't have e-mail (or even a cell phone). While most in our congregation have adopted technology such as e-mail, many others have not. This creates a "knowledge gap" within the congregation.

Here's the tough question: For a while we were bothered by the reality that some folks didn't use e-mail and didn't get particular types of information. However, at what point does a tool like e-mail become so accessible and affordable that it's reasonable to expect folks to adopt its use?

What's hard to know is how to deal with the person that refuses to use something like e-mail but then complains that they don't know everything that others who do use e-mail know. *—Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Investing in hope: A hope that makes us bold

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."—2 Corinthians 3:12 TNIV

One sign of hope that I see in the church today is the call from our youth and young adults for authenticity in relationships. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is a fascinating example to consider. It is one of the most emotionally honest and vulnerable epistles in the New Testament.

Paul pours out his heart to the Corinthian people, begging them to open up their hearts to him. Although he had planted the church at Corinth, they now doubted his apostleship. So he wrote to them "out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2:4).

As part of the argument to show that he was a true apostle, Paul tells the Corinthians how he had made the difficult transition from the ministry of the "old" covenant to the ministry of the "new." The reality of the new covenant, initiated by Jesus Christ, was Paul's primary source of hope and inspiration.

Yet this did not shield him from times of deep discouragement. In chapter 1, he tells about a time in the province of Asia when he lived under such great pressure that he despaired of life itself. In the midst of this difficult circumstance he experienced a time of great comfort from God.

Paul laid claim to competence as a minister of the new covenant. In contrast to the ministry of the old covenant, revealed in the stone cold commandments delivered on Mount Sinai, the ministry of the new covenant pulses with the vibrant life of the Spirit. The former was revealed in the face of Moses, the latter in the face of Jesus. The new covenant is far superior to the old. The new arrangement with God gives us great hope and emboldens us to live before God and others with an open face.

Paul asserts that such boldness contrasts with the timidity (and likely pride) of Moses, who hid his face from the people in order to maintain a facade of perfection (see 2 Corinthians 3:12-18). He shows how Moses gave people the impression that his face was always glowing with God's presence, when in reality it was fading. Read the background story in Exodus 34:29-35. It tells how Moses came down from the mountain with his face glowing with the presence of God. But later, he put a veil over his face to hide the fading glory. When he came back into the presence of God (in the Tent of Meeting), he unveiled his face to soak again in the rays of God's shekinah glory. After briefly showing his radiant face to the people, Moses veiled it again lest the people watch as the glory faded away.

Paul sees in this story a crucial difference between the old and the new covenant. In the new covenant, we have such hope in Christ that we gain the boldness to reveal our inadequacies and shortcomings to each other. We need not fear that the glory will fade from our face, since we continually look in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

That is good news for us as Anabaptist Christians who often struggle with the temptation to hide our imperfections from brothers and sisters in the faith. Perhaps because of our commitment to discipleship, we feel a particular burden to make a good impression on others. At times we worry that others may come to know us as we really are.

We nurture Christian hope in each other when we imitate the honesty, vulnerability and grace with which Paul wrote to the Corinthian people. Together, as we look into the face of Jesus Christ, we are transformed into his image. And the unfading glory of God, which comes from the Spirit, shows in our faces. TM

After briefly showing his radiant face to the people, Moses veiled it again lest the people watch as the glory faded away.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

************************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 943 01-JAN-13 66994 P-2 P77
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE 1858
ELKHART IN 46517-1947

FROM THE EDITOR

Six problems for mission agencies

Everett J. Thomas

Reporting from our mission agencies no longer gives us the numbers of souls saved.

Our mission and evangelism efforts are changing. On page 34, Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stanley Green explains why his agency must adapt to a world changed from 100 years ago.

But why are our mission agencies, such as Mennonite Mission Network and Eastern Mennonite Missions, receiving less and less support from us? Here are some reasons:

- Reporting from our mission agencies no longer gives us the number of conversions. Such numbers once gave us a sense of pride and confirmation that we were being faithful to the Great Commission. But, Green says, "our congregations must expect a different type of accountability than reports on the 'number of souls saved.'"
- We attach strings to our contributions. When we make a gift to support a mission agency, we want to see exactly where the money goes. This is a different expression of stewardship from what existed in the church several decades ago. Then, people gave to missions, relinquished connection to the money and trusted the people leading the mission endeavor to use it wisely.

But as support for mission dollars declined, some agencies followed this need to remain connected and established "mission support teams." This further reinforced the notion that we go with our dollars.

- The line between mission and service has been blurred. At one time we saw Mennonite Central Committee as the agency that provided relief and service to the impoverished and the oppressed "in the name of Christ," while our mission agencies did not. But now mission agencies may also be feeding the hungry or responding to a tsunami. Green describes this as "a more holistic approach to our witness."
- Many of us have relativized the gospel—or just plain lost confidence in it. In a world of many religions, we are no longer sure Jesus is the only way to God. It becomes easier to say all religions are good, and there is no need to hold Christian faith as extraordinary. And many of us are repelled by the coercion still present in the some evangelism tactics, or embarrassed by the colonialism implicit in our past efforts. So we have shifted from empathy for the gospel to apathy—and even antipathy.
- Some of us misunderstand St. Francis' famous quote, "Preach the gospel; if necessary, use words." This is usually a critique of what others are doing with their words and reinforces our pride: Mennonites respond to disasters and agitate for peace and justice, but we won't talk about why we do it. The priority may be to act, but that doesn't mean we seldom speak in a world that needs to hear about Christ.
- New mission strategies rely on partnerships in each country. But raising funds for partnerships is a tough sell for the agencies. Green notes that the former practice of sending Westerners into other countries has not been very effective. Example: After World War II, Western denominations flooded Japan with missionaries. None was allowed into China, however. Today, only 4 percent of Japan is Christian, while Christianity in China is growing rapidly. What would have happened in Japan if the emphasis was on training Japanese Christians to take the gospel to their families, friends and co-workers? This model is actually working at Lithuanian Christian College, where students from Muslim countries closed to outside mission workers now take the gospel home with them.

New missional language calls us each to join in the work God is already doing in the spheres of influence we inhabit locally. But we need mission agencies to extend our witness around the world. We are providing them less and less support, however. Take the list of reasons above and consider whether one or more rings true. Then send a contribution, or ask your congregation to increase support for mission work.—*ejt*

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
3 9304 02005677 7

FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA

The Mennonite

Mary, model and mother?

December 2011

www.TheMennonite.org

INSIDE:

- Surprised by joy
- Art for community's sake
- Nurseries and pulpits
- Building peaceful conversations
- A Christmas compromise

Mennonite
Church
USA

Don't give something
new for Christmas.
Give something old!

…the gift of our **faith heritage** with books, artwork and more from the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

The Radicals DVD
The major motion picture about Margaretha and Michael Sattler and the birth of Anabaptism. Also available in Spanish. **$30. $25 per copy for multiple copies.**

Anabaptist leaders poster series
A set of three posters of early Anabaptists Georg Blaurock, Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz. **$5**

Prince of Peace fraktur poster
Created by noted artist Roma J. Ruth, this four-color fraktur (a traditional German calligraphic art form) features Menno Simon's words about Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace. *Limited quantity.* **$25**

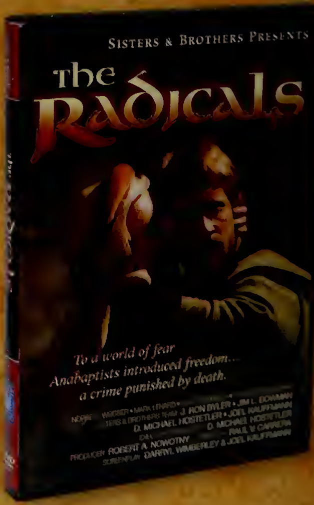
Also available as notecards. Four per package. **$4 for one package, $7.50 for two, $10 for three.**

Mennonite Historical Bulletin
The newly revamped quarterly magazine of popular history published by the Historical Committee. *Regular price $25 per year.* **Now $15 for one year or $25 for two years.**

Edward: Pilgrimage of a Mind edited by Ida Yoder
This journal of scholar and churchman Edward Yoder provides amazing insight into a critical era in the Mennonite Church (between 1931 and 1945) as it struggled between tradition and change. **$15**

J.C.: A Life Sketch by J.C. Wenger
Longtime Mennonite leader J.C. Wenger records his reflections and experiences, from growing up in eastern Pennsylvania to becoming a young teacher and minister to his prominence as a professor and speaker. Signed by the author. **$10**

To order, contact:
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, 1700 S. Main St.,
Goshen, IN 46526 • 1-866-866-2872 ext. 23080
history@mennoniteusa.org • www.mcusa-archives.org


Sisters & Brothers Presents
The Radicals
To a world of fear
Anabaptists introduced freedom...
a crime punished by death.

The Prince of Peace
Mennonite Historical Bulletin
100 Years of Minding Mennonite Memory
Edward
pilgrimage of a

Prices do not include shipping.

TheMennonite December 2011 | Volume 14, Number 12

CONTENTS

DEC 07 2011

12 Model and mother?
—Laurie Oswald Robinson

16 Mary's merciful song of justice
—Jan Johnson

20 Joseph the righteous
—Donna Mast

22 Surprised by joy
—Darrin W. Snyder Belousek

25 Art for community's sake
—Chad Martin

28 The words we sing
—Christine Longhurst

31 Cultivating transcendence
—John Eicher

37 MC USA responds to Palestinian Christians' appeal—Annette Brill Bergstresser

38 Haiti foundation offers business opportunities
—Sheldon C. Good

41 Kenya goat project demonstrates group power
—Matthew Kistler

43 The little churches that could stage *Godspell*
—Dan Shenk

44 Church harvests help end 'food deserts'—Anna Groff

45 Churches choose columbariums over cemeteries—Anna Groff

50 Church embarks on 'Alpha to Omega' journey
—Anna Groff

AMBS
LIBRARY
ELKHART
IN

ON THE COVER: Virgin and Child, José Jusepe de Ribera, c. 1646
www.philamuseum.org

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters
6 News Briefs
8 Grace and Truth
9 Poetry
10 Miscellany
12 Features
34 Leadership
35 Real Families
36 Opinion
37 News
53 For the Record
57 Classifieds
58 New Voices
59 Mediaculture
61 Puzzle
63 Mennonite Church USA
64 Editorial

TheMennonite
December 2011 | Volume 14, Number 12

The Mennonite is the publication of Mennonite Church USA, which established three purposes for the magazine: to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination, to promote the ministries within Mennonite Church USA and to offer an editorial voice distinct from but collaborative with other leadership voices. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 1522-7766) is published on the first Tuesday of each month by the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Periodicals Postage Paid at Goshen, IN 46526 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for one year: $46 to U.S. addresses and $54 USD to Canadian addresses. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite,* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc. Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

POSTMASTER send form 3579 to:
The Mennonite
1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526

STAFF
Editor: Everett J. Thomas
everettt@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Gordon Houser
gordonh@themennonite.org
Associate editor: Anna Groff
annag@themennonite.org
Advertising, subscriptions: Rebecca Helmuth
rebecca@themennonite.org
Bookkeeper: Celina Romero
Editorial assistant: Nora Miller
Design: Dee Birkey

WEB SITE www.themennonite.org

OFFICES
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526-4794
phone: 800-790-2498
fax: 574-535-6050

718 N. Main St.
Newton, KS 67114-1819
phone: 866-866-2872
fax: 316-283-0454

P.O. Box 1896
504 W. Choctaw Drive
Whiteriver, AZ 85941
phone: 928-338-6016

Mennonite
Church
USA

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letter brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. E-mail to letters@themennonite.org or mail to Letters, *The Mennonite,* 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Won't go to Phoenix

We at Lee Heights Community Church have struggled to understand the decision by the Executive Board of the Mennonite Church USA to affirm the choice of holding the 2013 convention in Phoenix. As a result of that choice, we have processed within our body of Christ a response based on prayer, discussion and corporate decision.

While we love and respect those who follow the lead of the Executive Board, we believe God is leading us in a different direction. We see the problem clearly as one in which the state of Arizona has legally authorized racial profiling of Hispanics. We believe strongly in the Mennonite Church USA statement on immigration and in particular these words: "We reject our country's mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status."

For us, this means that we will be joining many of our immigrant brothers and sisters and other like-minded people in not attending the Mennonite convention in 2013.*—Matthew J. Troyer, presiding elder, Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland*

Puzzled by Green's comments

In the November Leadership column, Stanley Green shared a number of significant shifts that have most certainly been game changers for the church of our times. However, I am not quite sure for whom this is new information. As a college student in the mid-1970s, I heard calls for a moratorium on Western mission activity, and I am sure that it was not new agenda for much of the Christian church at that time. Certainly, we need to embrace this changed mission paradigm.

I was puzzled by Green's comment, "Our congregations must expect a different type of accountability than reports on the 'number of souls saved.' "

I am not sure how to interpret that comment, which in the context seems quite pejorative. I have been in church leadership for some 30 years, and I can't remember receiving any such reports.

It would have been helpful in the next paragraph to actually tell a story that illustrated what he means then by, "We must expect to hear stories of God at work through our partners as lives are transformed by Jesus Christ through the authentic witness of our partners." Mission Network has the connections. Tell us the stories. I think many of us at the grassroots are all for it.*—Douglas J. Zehr, Orrville, Ohio*

Stanley Green responds

Thank you, Douglas Zehr, for your response. I note your concern about my remarks regarding how mission agencies will give account of their stewardship of the mandate and resources entrusted to them. Please observe that I did not disparage the coming-to-faith in Jesus Christ in places around the world where we have sent workers. That is the whole point of mission. That is why Mennonite Mission Network sends workers to many places around the world: so people everywhere can come into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

I was simply wanting to underscore the shifting paradigm where, increasingly, it is the nationals in almost every place where we work who are the primary (and most effective) evangelists. Those who come to faith do so because of their witness and preaching. Our work is to support and build capacity with the locals for the ministry to which God has called them. We share in the joy of the fruit of their witness, but for integrity's sake we cannot claim new believers who come to Christ as a result of our work.

In light of the shifting paradigm and our understanding of our new role, our strategic direction statement reads thus: "Mennonite Mission Network partners with others to establish and equip missional congregations and their leaders to engage their cultures and the world with the whole gospel of Jesus."—*Stanley Green, executive director, Mennonite Mission Network*

Crossword puzzle

I really enjoy the crossword puzzles in each issue. I feel one of the reasons you no longer get as many responses to the crossword puzzle is because you print the answers in the same issue. Perhaps if you did a survey as to other items in the magazine you would find that other features are even less popular than the crossword puzzle.—*Junia Schmidt, Hesston, Kan.*

Editor's note: *Each year we do a survey to learn how many readers enjoy various elements in the magazine. The crossword puzzle has consistently attracted the least readership. This is the reason the puzzle (page 61) will be among the eight pages discontinued from each issue beginning next month. To receive a copy of the 2011 survey, e-mail editor@themennonite.org.*

Buying into Bell's universalism?

I read with appreciation "True Evangelical Faith and the Gospel of Peace" by Gerald J. Mast (October). The article ended, however, with a debateable conclusion. Mast reflects favorably on Rob Bell's *Love Wins*.

"Nevertheless," Mast says, "in the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, even hell has been conquered and its inhabitants set free—by the way of the cross."

Is Mast buying into what seems to be Bell's universalism? Haven't many of us had a similar wish? But is this what the Bible says? Jesus the Lamb is also Judge in Revelation 20:15: "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Nothing is said here about this being temporary. Scripture overwhelmingly pictures the love of God in Christ Jesus, crucified for sinners so we can be reconciled to God. That's the exciting Good News.—*Eugene K. Souder, Grottoes, Va.*

I was very disappointed when I saw Everett J. Thomas giving *Love Wins* by Rob Bell, a favorable review in Mediaculture (October). Thomas writes, "*Love Wins* would be particularly helpful for young adults and others who are jaded by Christian expressions that seem judgmental and unloving."

I certainly do not agree. I don't want any of my young adults or anybody in the church I pastor to read this book. Bell's book is not biblically based; it is based on what the "world" wants to believe about hell.

Rob Bell doesn't think a loving God would create billions of people only to let them spend eternity in hell. In that point he is right. God didn't create people to spend eternity in hell. He created them to have fellowship with him. God even provided a way for them to get to heaven by sending Jesus to die upon the cross for our sins. People reject his great gift of love, and that is what gives them eternal punishment. —*Kurt Litwiller, pastor, Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church*

Delegates upheld policy

In the October editorial, Everett J. Thomas discusses the state of Mennonite Church USA as various congregations, conferences and individuals

(Continued on page 62)

IN THIS ISSUE

In this Christmas issue, we focus on Mary. Long-time freelance writer Laurie Oswald Robinson describes the way a Renaissance painting, like the one on our cover, helped her realize how little she was taught about Mary (page 12).

"Mary was a backdrop to the main character of Jesus," she says, "rather than a character in direct connection to him. The painting dared me into a 3-D reflection on the bond of Jesus to his mother, the mother to her son."

On page 16, Jan Johnson examines the balance of justice and mercy in Mary's song and says, "This wise young Galilean woman didn't diminish justice into a crusading moment of searing righteousness; neither did she water down mercy into weak gestures of kindness."

Grace and Truth columnist Isaac Villegas also connects Mary's song to the lowly and powerless today—those participating in the Occupy Wall Street movement (page 8).

Beginning in January, we will reduce the page count by eight to offset increases in paper prices and postage. Included in those eight are the poetry page (page 9), four pages from the feature section, one page from the news section and the two pages for the crossword puzzle and the names of those who completed the puzzle (pages 60 and 61).

"Creating [the puzzles] has always been a Bible study for me," says Jeanette Baer Showalter (page 61). However, to mark the Christmas season, Showalter created her final puzzle with lyrics from Christmas carols and hymns.

Finally, we say goodbye to our Real Families columnists (page 35). Beginning in January, this column will be replaced by a new column on global Anabaptism.—*Editor*

CLC begins new biennium, looks at member guidelines

HALIFAX, Pa.—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA, and Tom Kauffman, vice chair, opened the first Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meeting of the 2011-2013 biennium Oct. 24-26 at Camp Hebron, near Halifax. Approximately 80 people attended.

CLC includes representatives from the 21 area conferences of Mennonite Church USA and from agencies and constituency groups.

The group spent an afternoon discussing membership guidelines for Mennonite Church USA. The general consensus was that many sections are out of date. CLC members also called for updating the ministerial polity manual. However, no decisions were made regarding next steps.

Various conference leaders shared about missional moments, executive director Ervin Stutzman reported on the antiracism audit of the Pittsburgh 2011 convention, and CLC members discussed plans for the Phoenix 2013 convention.

CLC members also heard reports about resource development, the purposeful plan, the year of the Bible and a new training opportunity called Bienvenido (Welcome) around being a welcoming community/congregation for immigrants.

The next CLC meeting will be April 13-14, 2012, in the Goshen-Elkhart, Ind., area.—*Mennonite Church USA*

AAMA awards grants to three congregations

PITTSBURGH—At its meeting during Pittsburgh 2011 in July, the African American Mennonite Association awarded church improvement grants to three AAMA congregations, Infinity Mennonite Church in Harlem, N.Y., King of Glory Tabernacle in Bronx, N.Y., and Open Door Mennonite Church in Jackson, Miss.

AAMA gave grants of $800, $500 and $300 to encourage, resource and bless the ministries congregations are developing in their communities.

AAMA is also exploring leadership development ideas suggested at its business session. These include establishing portable institutes to train leaders, developing a resource bank for networking and initiatives to address youth violence.

AAMA churches seek tools or skills to develop leaders and be resources for the communities in which they serve, and AAMA is committed to developing initiatives to further this mission.
—*AAMA*

40-year mission worker to Japan dies at 78

ELKHART, Ind.—Virginia Mae Claassen, a 40-year mission worker to Japan, who taught elementary school to missionary children and English to Japanese nationals and co-pastored a Japanese church, died Oct. 22 in Newton, Kan., after living with cancer for nearly five years. She was 78.

Fellow mission workers say she will be remembered for her humility and the strong friendships she had forged with Japanese people.

Claassen, born to Carl and Elise Claassen on June 20, 1933, grew up on her family farm near Whitewater, Kan., and graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 1957.

She spent two years at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, where she earned a master's degree in religious education. She then began her mission work in Japan through the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Mission, a Mennonite Mission Network predecessor agency, in 1959. She later earned a master's degree in education from the University of Kansas.

Claassen returned to Newton after retiring from mission work in 1999 and volunteered for Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice and played host mother to international students at Bethel College. She was an active member at Emmaus Mennonite Church in Whitewater, the church that supported her throughout her ministry in Japan.

Claassen is survived by her brother, Milton Claassen, of Newton. Her memorial service was Nov. 21 at Emmaus Mennonite Church. A memorial service in Japan took place Nov. 20 at Sadowara Mennonite Church.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Everett J. Thomas

Director turns carpenter

Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., volunteered his time to do some finish carpentry Nov. 10-11 in the denomination's new office building in Elkhart, Ind. A group of donors provided six kinds of hardwood for the trim and made 60 interior doors.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everence Federal Credit Union addresses concerns

LANCASTER, Pa.—Everence Federal Credit Union said Nov. 1 that the community, member-focused approach by credit unions like itself is one reason why a national campaign, "Bank Transfer Day," is gaining traction.

The Credit Union National Association and the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association says the event expresses

ANDRES
AYALA
A

Claire Unruh

Mennonite students, thousands protest at SOA

From left: Sara Volweider, Megan Siebert and Maggie Goering—students at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.—dress as "the dead" as they participate in a memorial vigil commemorating those who died at the hands of SOA (School of the Americas) graduates. Thousands rallied Nov. 18-20 at the main gates of Fort Benning, Ga., to demand an end to U.S. militarization and for the closure of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, formerly the School of the Americas. Among those protesting this year were students from Mennonite Church USA colleges, including Bethel College, Goshen (Ind.) College and Hesston (Kan.) College. More than 30 students participated.—*Gordon Houser*

the frustration by customers of large national banks to rising fees and indifferent customer service attitudes.

Everence Federal Credit Union has worked to anticipate member needs through several programs and initiatives that support its members' desire to include faith and values in their financial decisions.

One such program is Rebate for Missions, which provides grants to national and local social mission agencies, funded by a percentage of income from the use of the credit union's VISA credit card. Other programs include loan programs, with incentives for energy-efficient autos and home improvements; budget and debt counseling; and community events, such as seminars and workshops that provide existing and prospective members a convenient way to access local credit union representatives and information. —*Everence*

CPT celebrates 25 years at Peacemaker Congress

EVANSTON, Ill.—"Re-Imagining Partnerships for Peacemaking—A 25th Anniversary Celebration" was the theme of Christian Peacemaker Teams' (CPT) Peacemaker Congress XI Oct. 13-16.

Sylvia Morrison, CPT's undoing racism coordinator, spoke on "Honoring Story," urging CPTers to incorporate the neglected stories of oppressed people, while not hesitating to tell their own stories.

Elce Redmond told how his experience accompanying Palestinian children to school on a CPT delegation led him to organize a group of volunteers in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago to accompany the children there to school because fights regularly break out among the students.

Angelica Castellanos of CAHUCOPANA, a grassroots human rights group CPT Colombia accompanies, said that CPT's accompaniment is essential to protect CAHUCOPANA members from paramilitary violence.

Fatiyeh Gainey, a Palestinian and the first Muslim CPTer, described the role of nonviolence in Islam and the challenges she has faced. Mohamed Salah, a Kurdish Muslim schoolteacher who is the translator and advisor for CPT, spoke of his five years of partnership with CPT in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Participants took part in a candlelight vigil and prayed at a local park where violence had occurred.—*CPT*

Cookbook authors give royalties to feed hungry

WATERLOO, Ontario—*Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, written by 10 Mennonite women and published by Herald Press, the book publishing imprint of MennoMedia, has a unique twist: The authors are donating the royalty money to feed orphaned children.

Together they have chosen the Good Shepherd Shelter in the Ukraine as their project. The Ukraine holds a special place in their hearts, as many of their grandparents and even parents escaped the collapse of that society. Their grandparents and parents still remember the heart-wrenching flight from well-established farms, the target of revolutionaries.—*MennoMedia*

Dutch Mennonites celebrate 200th anniversary

ELSPEET, the Netherlands—More than 1,500 Mennonites gathered Sept. 18 for a final jubilee celebration that marked the 200th anniversary of the Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit—Dutch Mennonite General Conference.

Festivities featured about 30 workshops under the theme "New Paths of Believing." Topics included nonresistance, aging in relation to congregational development, climate change, sustainability, the story of the 2010 Lutheran-Mennonite reconciliation, and reporting on the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in May in Jamaica.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Mary: Rejoice with the lowly

Isaac Villegas is pastor of Chapel Hill (N.C) Mennonite Church.

What happens when you are filled with Jesus, when Jesus grows inside your life? When you are full of Jesus, what do you say? These questions take us into the heart of Advent. These questions take us into the womb of Mary, where we find Jesus, filling her body. And we listen to what Mary says when Jesus grows into her life.

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior," she says, "for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant" (Luke 1:46-48).

Mary knows what lowliness feels like. She was born into poverty and now is pregnant out of wedlock. With every inch her belly grows, her reputation is degraded as people drag her name in the dirt. Who would believe a teenage girl who claims that the Messiah dwells in her womb?

Despite what the world may think of her, of her lowliness, of what she's done with her life, Mary knows God's favor and sings, "My soul magnifies the Lord, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

"He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly," she says, "he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty" (vv. 52-53).

As Jesus grows into Mary's life, she prophesies good news for the lowly, which involves bad news for the powerful. With Jesus in her body, Mary speaks a word of hope that involves a word of judgment.

Mary's words are living and active. They resound from places we may not have thought of as hospitable for God—like the womb of a poor teenage girl.

A few chapters later in Luke's Gospel, Jesus' proclamation echoes his mother's words: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ... But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ... Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry" (6:20-25).

These are words of reversal, of overturning, of powerful leaders being deposed, "brought down from their thrones," of the rich being banished, "sent away," and of the satisfied being made hungry.

When we read and listen to the Scriptures, we become familiar with God's voice, we learn what God's words sound like. With ears tuned into God's Word, we can begin to hear echoes of the Word in the world. The voice of God resounds all around us, beckoning us into God's movement, set in motion by the uncontrollable wind of the Spirit.

In this season of Advent, as we dwell with Mary, the one who is filled with Jesus, we let her words draw us into resonances of the gospel we may not have heard before. Mary's words are living and active. They resound from places we may not have thought of as hospitable for God—like the womb of a poor teenage girl

These slogans were among the protestors with the Occupy Wall Street movement: "End corporate greed," "People over profits," "Money for jobs and education, not wars and occupation."

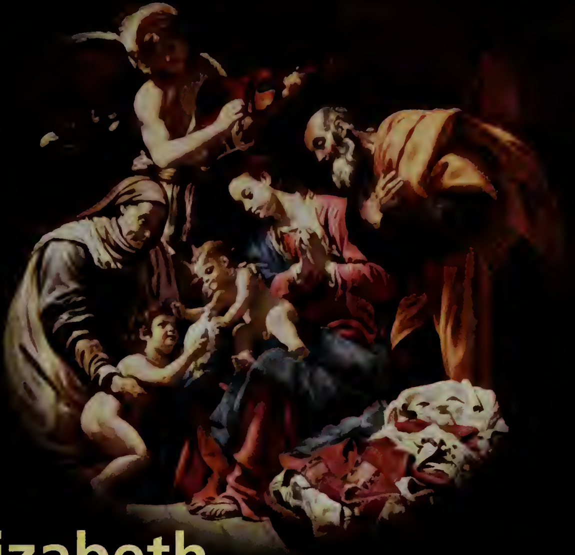
Mary's words and these words resonate with each other, inviting us to consider what it would mean to let God's Word echo through us today: to say, with Mary, full of grace, full of Jesus, God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

Who knows where the protests will lead. But for now, during Advent, we should rejoice as they enact good news for the poor, the news that Mary prophesies, because the homeless have found a home and the hungry are being fed. A man who has spent months living in public restrooms and under freeways found a safe home with the people of Occupy Oakland.

"If I need clothes, someone donates clothes," he said as he joined the camp. "If I need medical help, there are medics here. Everyone gets well fed."

A manager at the food tent in Occupy LA told the gathered crowds, "If you are hungry and are in need of a meal, we will serve you. We don't turn anyone away. I don't care what your address is."

The Lord has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. TM



St. Elizabeth tells all

by Bill McConnell

At first I thought that Zechariah burned his foot,
the way he pointed at the fire and hopped around.
But when he swirled his cloak around him
like majesty itself,
I guessed, "Angel?
You saw an angel?"
Then the flame leapt in his eyes
and the wrinkles around his mouth
radiated over his entire face.
For a long moment, I too stood mute.

He traced an arc out from my belly.
"Pregnant? God's promise of some young woman ...?"
He hushed me with a finger to my lips.
It was then, before he ever held me,
that I knew.
How was it with you?

Bill McConnell is a member of Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo.

Your cognitive style may predict your religious conviction

How you think and solve problems may relate closely to how strongly you believe in God, according to a study by Harvard University.

"In a series of studies, investigators found that people with a more intuitive thinking style tend to have stronger beliefs in God than those with a more reflective style. Intuitive thinking means going with one's first instinct and reaching decisions quickly based on automatic cognitive processes," writes Rick Nauert in a Sept. 21 release from Harvard University.

Reflective thinking, on the other hand, involves questioning one's first instinct and considering other possibilities, thus allowing for counterintuitive decisions.

The research was published online in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

In the first part of the study, researchers presented an online survey to 882 U.S. adults (64 percent of them women), with a mean age of 33.

The survey first assessed the participants' belief in God. Then it provided questions to find out each person's cognitive style. To do this the survey presented three math problems with incorrect answers that seemed intuitive.

For example, one question stated: "A bat and a ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?"

The automatic or intuitive answer is 10 cents, but the correct answer is 5 cents. Participants who had more incorrect answers showed a greater reliance on intuition than reflection in their thinking style.

Participants who gave intuitive answers to all three problems were one and a half times as likely to report they were convinced of God's existence as those who answered all of the questions correctly.

And this pattern did not depend on other demographic factors, such as the participants' political beliefs, education or income.

"Researchers also discovered participants with an intuitive thinking style also were more likely to have become more confident believers in God over their lifetimes, regardless of whether they had a religious upbringing," writes Nauert.

On the other hand, "individuals with a reflective style tended to become less confident in their belief in God."

Researchers make the point, however, that the association between thinking styles and religious beliefs were not tied to the participants' thinking ability or IQ.

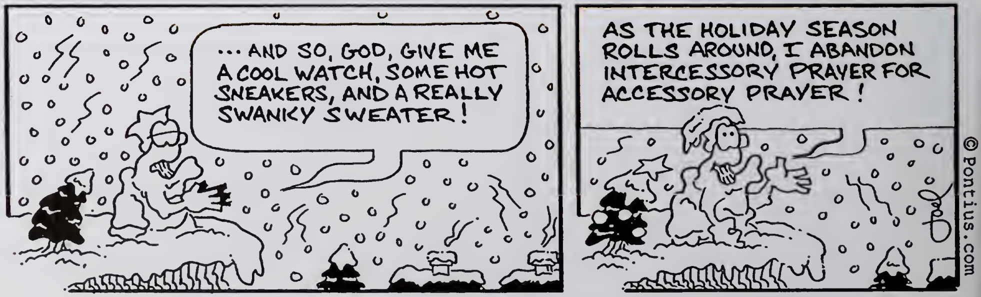
"Basic ways of thinking about problem solving in your everyday life are predictive of how much you believe in God," writes one researcher. "It's not that one way is better than the other. Intuitions are important and reflection is important, and you want some balance of the two. Where you are on that spectrum affects how you come out in terms of belief in God."

Researchers warn, though, that the trend can go in the opposite direction, that a belief in God may lead to intuitive thinking.

What does this mean for us? Note that this research has nothing to do with the content of religious belief. For instance, how strongly we may believe in God has nothing to do with whether or not God exists.

What this study may help us do is be more tolerant of one another's beliefs. While some of us may be able to express clear and confident beliefs, others of us may experience some doubt and need to reflect.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle Joel Kauffmann


...AND SO, GOD, GIVE ME A COOL WATCH, SOME HOT SNEAKERS, AND A REALLY SWANKY SWEATER!
AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON ROLLS AROUND, I ABANDON INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR ACCESSORY PRAYER!
© Pontius.com

> “Our tendencies to overacquire and consume resources are adversely affecting both the physical health of individuals and the social health of our society.—Peggy La Cerra in *Spirituality & Health*”

Sisters of St. Francis go after Wall Street

Long before Occupy Wall Street, the Sisters of St. Francis were quietly staging an occupation of their own. In recent years, this Roman Catholic order of 540 or so nuns has become a surprising group of corporate activists around. The nuns have gone toe-to-toe with Kroger, the grocery store chain, over farm worker rights; with McDonald's, over childhood obesity; and with Wells Fargo, over lending practices. They have tried, with mixed success, to exert some moral suasion over Fortune 500 executives, a group not always known for its piety.—*New York Times*

$2.3 billion

Amount the financial services industry, including real estate, spent on federal campaign contributions from 1990 to 2010, which was more than the health care, energy, defense, agriculture and transportation industries combined, according to one consumer group using information from Opensecrets.org.

66%

Amount decrease in median wealth in U.S. Hispanic households from 2005 to 2009, according to the Census Bureau—*New York Times*

Global food prices spike

Global food prices have spiked twice in the last three years, largely for two reasons, according to a study by the New England Complex Systems Institute: increasing diversion of grain to ethanol production and speculation in the commodities market. Ethanol this year will consume 40 percent of the U.S. corn crop, which constitutes 16 percent of world corn production. With the deregulation of commodity futures in 2000, the futures market has become another place for speculative investments, resulting in huge spikes in food commodities. The authors recommend two steps to bring down and stabilize food prices: restore financial regulations in the commodities market and end ethanol production.—*Christian Century*

49%

Muslims in the United States who say they think of themselves first as Muslims rather than as Americans.

70%

Evangelicals in the United States who say they think of themselves first as Christians rather than as Americans.
—*Christianity Today*

Where has all the soil gone?

The world is losing soil 10-40 times faster than nature can replenish it. Ethiopia loses 2 billion tons of topsoil each year, and China loses 4.5 billion. Iowa has lost nearly half its dirt in the past century. Over the past four decades, a third of the earth's prime agricultural land has become too eroded to farm on.—*Sierra*

Evangelicals call for nuclear cutbacks

The National Association of Evangelicals on Nov. 8 called for greater precautions with nuclear weapons and a renewed effort toward disarmament. NAE president Leith Anderson said, “Nuclear weapons don't serve as a deterrent to the dangers of our post-Cold War era, which include rogue nations and terrorist groups.—*Religion News Service*

Prohibitive parking

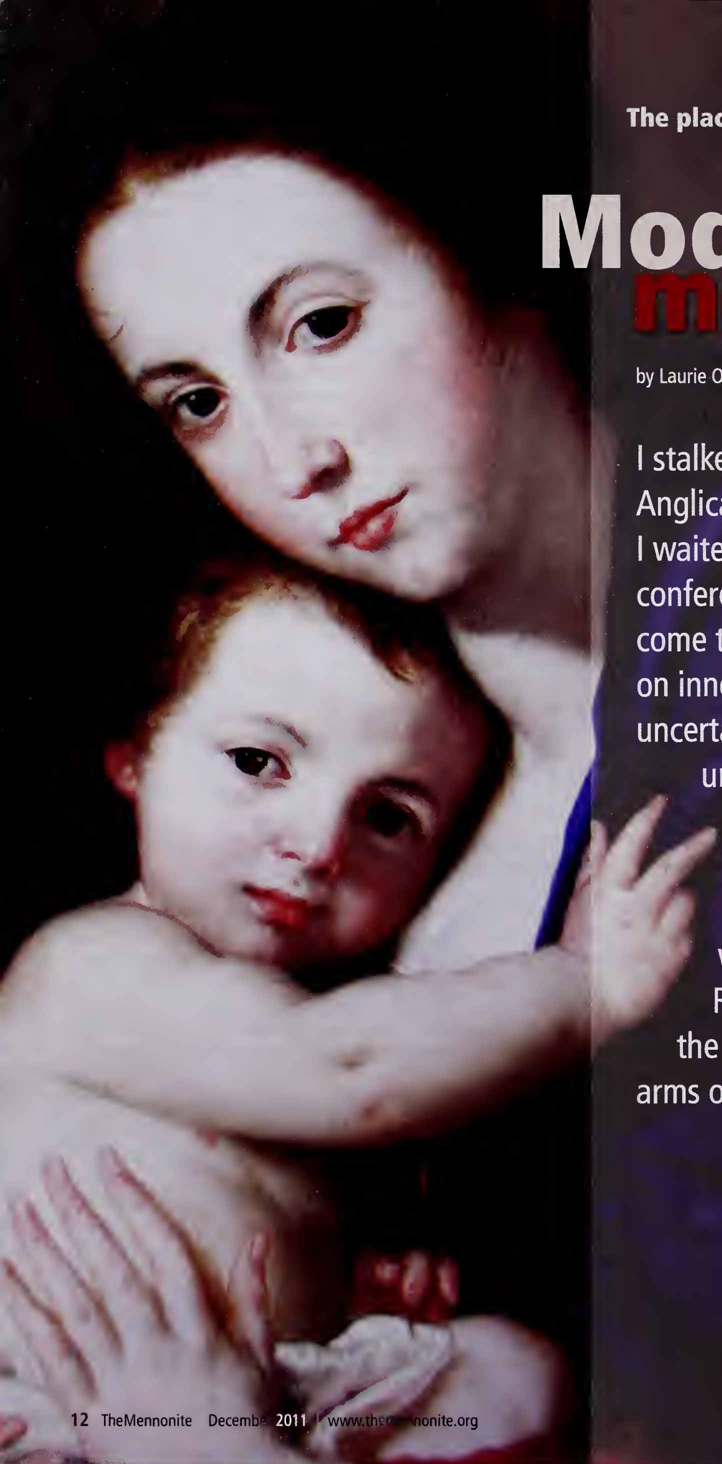
In an attempt to boost walking, cycling and public transit, Paris, Amsterdam, Zurich, Copenhagen, New York, San Francisco and other cities have replaced parking spots with bus lanes, bike lanes and even tiny parks. The result is less driving. As one study of the phenomenon notes, “Every car trip begins and ends in a parking space, so parking regulation is one of the best ways to regulate car use.”—*Sierra*

The effects of Bible reading

According to the Baylor Religion Survey in 2007, Americans who read the Bible more frequently are more inclined to support abolishing the death penalty, believe science and religion are compatible, agree that actively seeking social and economic justice makes one a better person and believe that consuming and using fewer goods makes one a better person.—*Christianity Today*

Environmental notes

- An iceberg the size of Bermuda has broken off Greenland and is drifting toward Canada.
- The declining sea ice off Greenland is now too thin for dogsleds, leading some Inuit hunters to shoot their dogs.
- After dropping in 2008 and 2009, U.S. CO2 emissions increased by 3 percent in 2010.
- In July, all 50 states set high temperature records.—*Sierra*



The place of Mary for Mennonites

Model and mother?

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

I stalked the hallways of the Anglican church nervously as I waited for the healing prayer conference to begin. I had come to do some soul work on inner wounds, and I felt uncertain about what was to unfold. As I veered into a corridor off the beaten path from the registration tables, I was drawn to a giant Renaissance painting of the toddler Jesus in the arms of his mother, Mary.

I stopped cold in my fidgety tracks and quieted like a calm before a storm.

As a Mennonite girl who grew up with a minimal rendering of Mary, the painting seemed garish in its larger-than-life size and message: This is no ordinary toddler, no ordinary mother, no ordinary relationship between parent and child. In my Anabaptist formation in the 1960s and '70s, the portrayal of Mary was sparse, given how the biblical text said so little about her. Mary was a backdrop to the main character of Jesus rather than a character in direct connection to him. The painting dared me into a 3-D reflection on the bond of Jesus to his mother, the mother to her son.

During the conference, I uncovered how some important emotional links between me and my mother were broken in childhood. I was broken by those missing links and needed healing. During the interior pilgrimage at the conference, I contrasted what I saw in that painting with a lack of connectedness in my own life. As an adult, I could not go back into childhood. But I could restore that parent-child connection. I could forgive others who had hurt me and confess my wrongs in hurting others. I could give my pain and suffering to the suffering Christ on the cross. I could receive a sense of being and affirmation from my Creator and my Redeemer. I could heal.

But too dangerous to absorb at the time was the thought that I could experience an intimate connection to the mother of my Redeemer that could aid in my healing and my redemption. In the following decade-plus after this conference, my winding journey led me down many detours that were always within eye shot of this mother, but never close enough to be cradled in her arms. Paralleling my healing journey was a growing unrest. Though I valued my Anabaptist heritage that had faithfully brought me into a solid faith, I was stirred to seek a different expression of Christian faith. It was one that embraced the view that Jesus instituted the church and passed it on to the apostles. They in turn passed it on to a visible and unbroken line of apostolic succession in the Roman Catholic Church for almost 2,000 years.

Reluctantly, doggedly, I inched my way toward Mary as I simultaneously struggled to discern whether I would enter this visible Body of Christ. I was a product of the Reformation that had broken away from this ancient church, and I was alternately awed, frightened and repelled by where I sensed the Holy Spirit leading me. But finally, after 15 years of struggle, I was tired and longed to be "home." On Easter Vigil 2009, I entered the Catholic Church and finally rested in the arms of Mother Church and its Mother, who I now recognized as my spiritual mother, too.

On my journey, I discovered I could not separate the Redeemer from the virgin woman who birthed him as the Son of God and Son of Humanity. According to Catholic doctrine, God chose her for an integral role in the gospel story before she was born. At the moment of her conception, she was set free from the stain of original sin by the grace of Christ, who would be both her child and her Savior. In light of this long-held orthodox view of Mary, I wanted not only to honor his mother as a model in her yes to God's plan. I wanted to recognize her as a spiritual mother who would help birth Christ in me so I could better say "yes" to his plan for my life.

Though I valued my Anabaptist heritage that had faithfully brought me into a solid faith, I was stirred to seek a different expression of Christian faith.

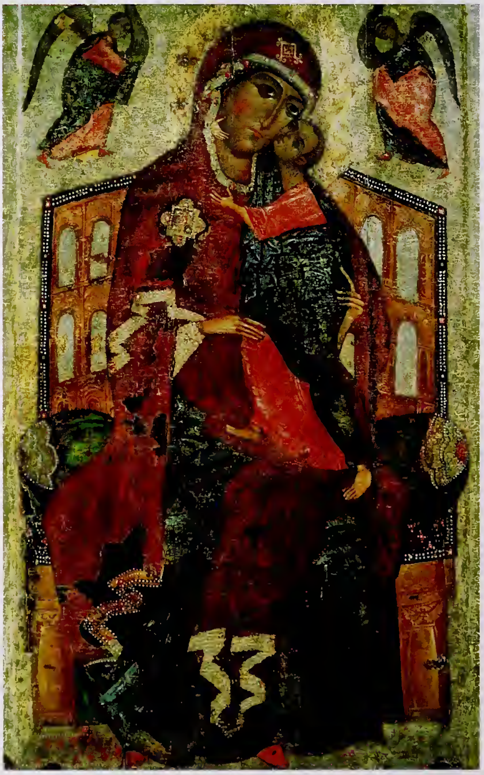
And as part of the Communion of Saints, she was in heaven to intercede for me to my heavenly Father and my heavenly Savior. She did not seek worship for herself; neither was I to worship her. Her role was to guide me into a deeper relationship with Jesus and aid me in my journey of entering into union with our Lord. As a part of this communion on both sides of the vale, I no longer felt like a motherless child, disconnected in a disconnected world. I was part of an unbroken chain of connected children within the family of God.

Clothing Mary in Anabaptist dress

My soul has suffered many birth pangs as I've struggled to absorb this larger understanding of Mary as mother of Mother Church as well as my own mother. I desire to more fully understand this powerful primal, familial connection that I share with the Mother of God—in theological terms as well as in my personal discipleship. Many Mennonites are also struggling to understand the role of Mary and how their view of her may be changing in their own lives and in the life of the Anabaptist church.

For example, this past spring, the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., sponsored a conference, "My Soul Rejoices in God my Savior: Mary in Anabaptist Dress." In an AMBS news story afterward, Mary E. Klassen described the findings of the conference, including excerpts from a presentation given by John Rempel, AMBS professor of theology and Anabaptist studies. He examined how the Reformers of the 16th century viewed Mary. Affection for Mary carried forward into most Anabaptists' faith, he said. But first-generation Protestants connected "Mary in her relationship to Christ rather than as co-mediator of salvation." One area for further Anabaptist exploration is the belief in the Communion of Saints, he said. "The saints in God's presence are now so at one with God's will that they pray with us for God's purposes to be realized in our lives. The saints pray with us, not because we appeal to them, but because they now unreservedly will what God wills."

> We have kept Jesus but not the womb that bore him, the woman who created with God.—Elizabeth Soto Albrecht



wikimedia.org | The Theotokos of Tolga icon, c. 1314

Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, an ordained minister in the Colombian Mennonite Church and moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA, reflected how Mary has been important in her spiritual journey, beginning in her early life as a Catholic. She observes that in the Mennonite church today, there may be little room for appreciating Mary. But Soto Albrecht confessed she sees a need for more female images to nurture Mennonite theology. "We have thrown out the basin with the bathwater," she said. "We have kept Jesus" but not the womb that bore him, the woman who created with God. By so doing, the church lost valuable perspectives that can help it know and follow Jesus.

Wendy Wright, professor of theology at the University of Creighton in Omaha, Neb., looked for commonalities between the Catholic devotion to Mary and elements of Mennonite, Anabaptist faith: Three of these are discipleship: the free acceptance of invitation to do God's will, martyrdom: seeing the love of God and the cross of Christ as connected, and the corporate nature of the Christian life: sharing God's love with others after experiencing it personally.

She emphasized that a template of discipleship is present in Mary, who said yes to God and went to visit Elizabeth, sharing her news. "When we open to God—open to the 'yes'—we intrinsically visit others," Wright said.

The echoes of this conference are resounding closer to home, as members of local congregations are also re-examining Mary. For example, pastors and laity in Newton, Kan., hosted a vesper service, "Celebration of Mary, the Mother of Jesus." It was held at New Creation Fellowship on Aug. 14 to correspond with the Feast of the Assumption, which in the church year celebrates Mary's bodily assumption into heaven. One of the event planners was Mary Herr, a longtime spiritual director. With her husband, Gene, she helped pave the way for Anabaptists to experience a more contemplative spiritual journey as the Herrs hosted guests at The Hermitage, a retreat center they founded in Michigan.

"Many people have been drinking out of other traditions [regarding Mary], and it is time to bring her closer to home, where we can view her from our Anabaptist traditions," Herr said.

She believes the AMBS conference, as well as the many ways in which congregations are singing hymns about Mary in new hymnals, such as *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*, show a growing awareness of the connection to Mary from the Anabaptist perspective. It's a connection that Herr has nurtured for many years in her own spiritual journey as she views Mary as a model of Christian discipleship and mentor for the human experience. Much of her formation on Mary was shaped by the spiritual classic *The Reed of God* by the late Caryll Houselander, recently republished by Ave Maria Press.

"This book opened me up to a new awareness of Mary as a person who believed what she had been given and didn't refute it with a no," Herr said. "She asked the question, 'How can this be?' But then she went on to accept God's plan with a 'yes.' She could say, "Be it unto me," even though she did not know the full implications of this 'yes.' She modeled an acceptance of life as it is but a life that is also lived in the presence and strength of Jesus."

Daring to receive Mary as mother

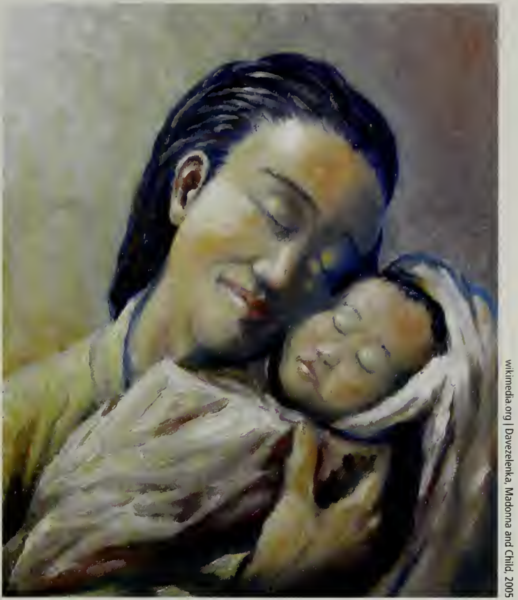
I resonate with Herr and the AMBS conference participants, as I do with my Catholic family. I have strong relationships with brothers and sisters in both faith traditions. And because of those bonds, I pray for the grace for all of us to ponder a couple of potentially unifying questions: How did she view herself? How did Jesus view her? What place, what role, what name did they ascribe to her?

A good place to start, and perhaps a good place to end this essay, is to reflect on the words found in The Magnificat in Luke 1, as well as Jesus' words on the cross in John 19.

In Luke 1:46-50, Mary sings, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation."

In John 19:25-27, Jesus, about to expire from crucifixion, looked down at those standing near the cross, including his mother and his disciple John, and said, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."

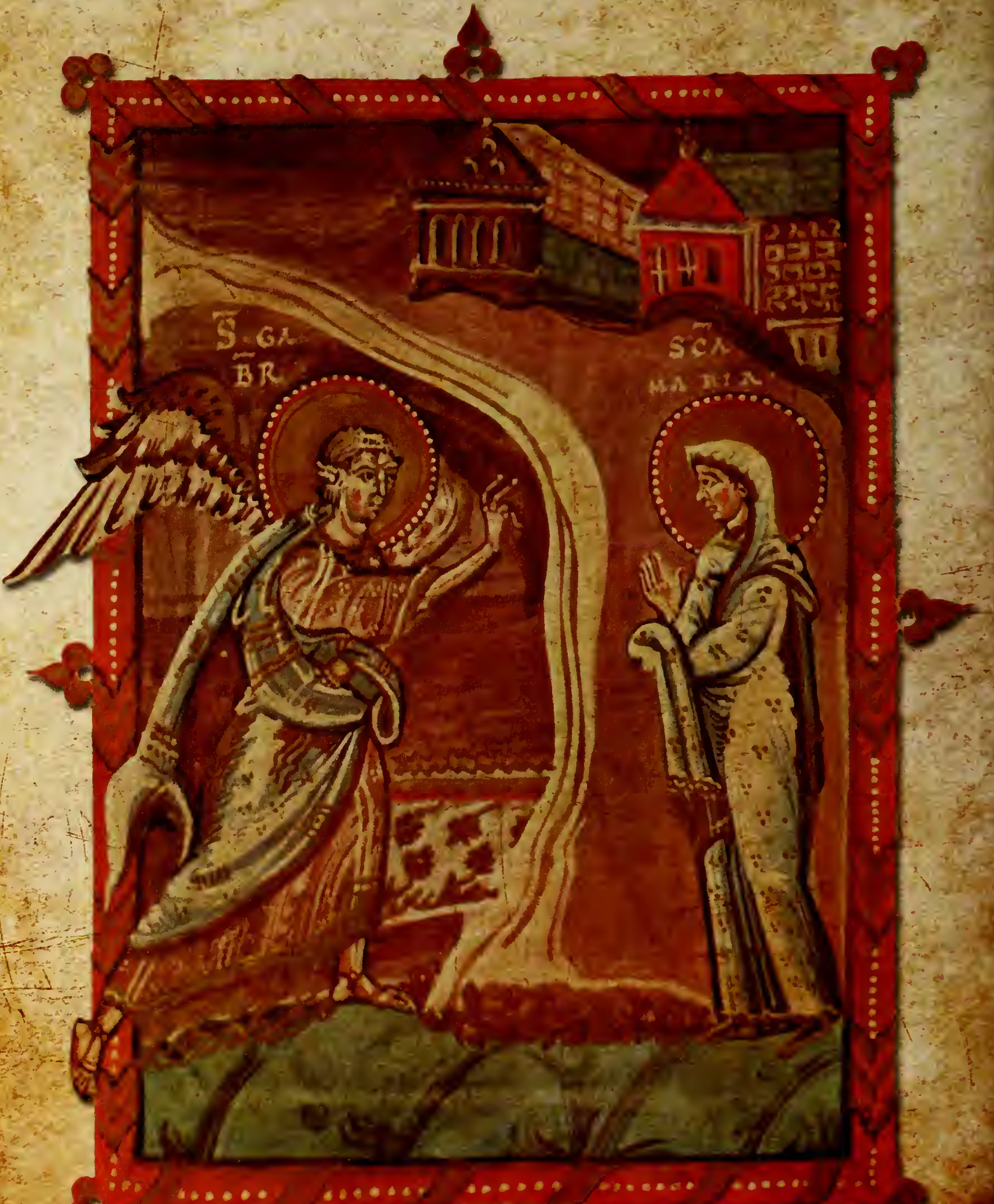
Many Roman Catholics, including myself, address Mary as the Blessed Mother. That title intertwines two threads: Mary's self-description as blessed because of what God has done in her life and Jesus' desire to give Mary to John as his mother and John to his mother as her son—a symbol of her mothering role in the ongoing life of the church.


wikimedia.org | Davezelenka, Madonna and Child, 2005

Many people have been drinking out of other traditions [regarding Mary], and it is time to bring her closer to home, where we can view her from our Anabaptist traditions.—Mary Herr

Could Mennonites dare to join centuries of Christians, from John onward, who have received Mary not only as a model but as mother? It is a question God's children cannot ignore as they receive Jesus as brother and Savior. He was born and raised by a mother who still helps birth and guide those on earth who are born in Christ from above.

Laurie Oswald Robinson is a free-lance writer in Newton, Kan., and the author of Forever Family.


S GA BR
SCA MARIA

True justice is not distinct from but rooted in mercy.

Mary's merciful song of justice

A severe, hard-bitten view of justice is all too familiar to us. "She got what she had coming to her." "He was asking for it; lock him up and throw away the key." "Three strikes, you're out." On the other side we have mercy: a soft thing that offers second chances, urges us to forgive and forget.

by Jan Johnson

We tend to set up justice and mercy like equal and opposite forces and talk about the need to balance deeds of justice with acts of mercy as if there were a quota system for each or some magical formula for knowing when to do what. For example, when my children were young, I asked myself continually, Is this a moment to show justice by presenting consequences? Or a moment to show mercy by working around their silly demands? It can get confusing: We know how to be tough; we know how to be tender. But how do we know when to do what?

This separate but equal view of justice and mercy, however, was not the view of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as revealed in her song of justice, commonly referred to as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). Instead, she wove the two attributes together into a stunning, seamless garment:

"His *mercy* is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and *lifted up the lowly*;
he has *filled the hungry with good things*,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has *helped his servant Israel,*
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

(Luke 2:50-56, italicized phrases speak of mercy; underlined phrases speak of justice).

This wise young Galilean woman didn't diminish justice into a crusading moment of searing righteousness; neither did she water down mercy into weak gestures of kindness. As the lowly were lifted up and the hungry filled, the tides of economic culture would be tipped so that the proud-hearted would be scattered, the powerful brought down and the rich emptied. The dominant, authoritative ones would be turned around in their boots. (Perhaps this is what God mercifully knew they needed to come to themselves.)

Mary understood that the sort of justice God dispenses flows with mercy because it reverses life's unjust circumstances, as we know them.

Mary understood that the sort of justice God dispenses flows with mercy because it reverses life's unjust circumstances, as we know them. This penchant God has for turning the tables upside down is what Dallas Willard calls, in *The Divine Conspiracy* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), the Great Inversion: "There are none in the humanly 'down' position so low that they cannot be lifted up by entering God's order, and none in the humanly 'up' position so high that they can disregard God's point of view on their lives. The barren, the widow, the orphan, the eunuch, the alien, all models of human hopelessness, are fruitful and secure in God's care."

Yet this Great Inversion is not God's arbitrary attempt to level the playing field but an offer of hope to those who have been denied hope and a challenge to trust to those who have not been forced to trust.

Mary's example urges us to tag along behind God in lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with good things.

True justice is not distinct from but rooted in mercy. In God's economy, justice and mercy often appear in tandem: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another" (Zechariah 7:9). Jesus scolded the carefully righteous, spice-rack tithing Pharisees for neglecting the "weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Matthew 23:23). Mercy and justice make natural companions in the person of Jesus Christ, who is described as "full of grace [mercy] and truth [justice]" (John 1:14).

How this amalgamation of justice and mercy helps us! When we truly understand it, we no longer have to wonder if this is a moment to be tough or tender. It's always a moment to be tough and tender because justice and mercy complement each other: Justice is rooted in mercy and mercy often results in a surprising blaze of justice. Tough love is not hard-hearted but full-hearted, watching for faith and honoring it whenever it is found, hoping not to punish folks into oblivion but pull them back into the fold with grace and forgiveness. The picture frequently drawn of the Hebrew God who dispensed justice but neglected mercy is simply not true: "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Personally involved

Mary also understood that God's penchant for reversing circumstances manifests itself in intensely personal ways. God is not a bureaucrat, willing to invert circumstances only for the welfare of nations. Instead, God becomes involved in the lives of individuals loved by their Creator.

Even before Mary had to flee to Egypt as a political refugee, she knew that Judean Jews looked down on Galilean Jews as impure, backward, poor and ignorant. Yet the message of the angel was that the divine Messiah would not come from the exalted, pedigreed Jerusalem area but from her "tainted" Galilean territory and her impoverished Nazarene household-to-be. So God's topsy-turvy way of dealing with folks was real to her. Once again, as Walter Brueggemann writes in *The Prophetic Imagination* (Fortress Press, 1978), God was creating an "unthinkable turn in human destinies when all seemed impossible":

"*My soul* magnifies the Lord,
and *my spirit* rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has *looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant*.
Surely, from now on *all generations will call me blessed;*
for *the Mighty One has done great things for me*,
and holy is his name" (Luke 1:46-49; italicized words and phrase indicate personal dealings).

One gracious upshot of understanding that God blends justice and mercy is a willingness to trust God, to want this God to "dwell in my heart through faith." I begin to believe that God really does make all things work for "good" and that perhaps this good isn't some brutal thing that will chafe and annoy me but a goodness sweet to the tongue. It makes me want to jump on board with this God and abide there. As I do, I explore the nuances of mercy and justice in each situation, seeing that God isn't on one person's side but on everyone's side, weaving justice and mercy through each circumstance.

Being present to the voiceless

Mary's example urges us to tag along behind God in lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with good things. We are to pay attention to their plight (offering justice) and be present to their person (showing mercy). Our interaction with them is vital for our faith: It gives hope; it tests our automatic responses and normal gestures of respect; it teaches us to love as almost nothing else can.

My training ground in this occurs on Monday mornings working at the shower desk at a drop-in center for the homeless. There I fold towels, do laundry and hang out with folks who own less than would fill a small corner of my garage. Yet they're always saying, "I'll get by." There I stand at the center's shower desk—the longtime, learned Christian who teaches regularly on faith—seeing, hearing and touching faith that is greater than my own. I return home enriched.

One important way to offer a voice to the voiceless is respect. Dorothy Day tells this story in *Loaves and Fishes* (Orbis, 1963): "I had occasion to visit the City Shelter last month, where homeless families are cared for. I sat there for a couple of hours contemplating poverty and destitution in a family. Two of the children were asleep in the parents' arms and four others were sprawling against them. Another young couple were also waiting, the mother pregnant. I did not want to appear to be spying since all I was there for was the latest news on apartment-finding possibilities for homeless families. So I made myself known to the young man in charge. He apologized for having let me sit there; he'd thought, he explained, that I was 'just one of the clients.' "

While I, too, have been made to wait because I've been mistaken for being "just one of the clients" by police, social workers or the public health nurse, I've also been the one dismissing folks. I've caught myself feeling free to be rude to clients, to interrupt them while they're talking. I've walked in front of clients without excusing myself, as I would never do with anyone else. I cringe to think that in the beginning of my years there I spoke a little more loudly to clients with poor English. (Now I warn new volunteers by teasing them: "They're not deaf—only Latino.") God's voice murmurs to me as I work, "Do you see me within this person? I am here. Love me."

All this speaks to me about how to practice a life woven with justice and mercy. It's only after seven years of volunteering that I can respond to the rare client who is loud and abrasive by saying in a soft voice, "I'm sorry, but I can't let you talk to me that way. If it continues, you'll have to leave." The odd mixture of justice and mercy often confuses them. They're used either to being yelled at or catered to.

In the early days, I snapped back. Then, after a few years, I tried to be saintly by saying nothing but fuming silently. Mixing toughness and tenderness has only come by hearing their voices and honoring their presence as I practice God's presence within.

Singing out of our soul

Sometimes we're asked to follow Mary's lead even further and speak up to family, friends and church members about giving a voice to the voiceless. Whether this is a response to their comment about a bag lady or a suggestion to a group that wants to serve, we speak up for the plight of the voiceless. What works best, I believe, is telling stories. I don't have to preach or pontificate, but I can tell about heart-wrenching acts clients do for each other or that volunteers do when they think no one is looking.

But justice must permeate these merciful descriptions. We speak with integrity, without glorifying involuntary poverty. While acknowledging that many clients have made poor life choices, we still advocate mercy in the midst of justice. Seeing and hearing about acts of just mercy awaken folks from their numbness as nothing else does.

In this way, we join Mary in her song because, as Dorothy Day wrote, "We need always to be thinking and writing about [poverty], for if we are not among its victims, its reality fades from us. We must talk about poverty because people insulated by their own comfort lose sight of it." Quoting her Catholic Worker co-founder, Peter Maurin, Day wrote (in *Loaves and Fishes*) that "the truth needs to be restated every 20 years." Because I now live in a middle-class suburb, I seem to need to hear this truth frequently (every Monday to be exact) or I will lapse into a world of me, myself and I.

By and by, giving a voice to the voiceless changes us inside, as spiritual disciplines tend to do.

By and by, giving a voice to the voiceless changes us inside, as spiritual disciplines tend to do. It changes one of the worst of our errant core beliefs (which truly rule our feelings and behaviors even though we deny we believe them), that God is a scolding schoolteacher or angry drill sergeant. As we learn to speak to others with grace and truth, we no longer hear the voice of God in our minds nagging and taunting. Instead, the tone of that voice is gentle and full of reminders of truth. When someone else speaks of God as harsh (without mercy) or as weak (without justice), it feels downright wrong to us. We have tasted the grace and truth of God and savored it.

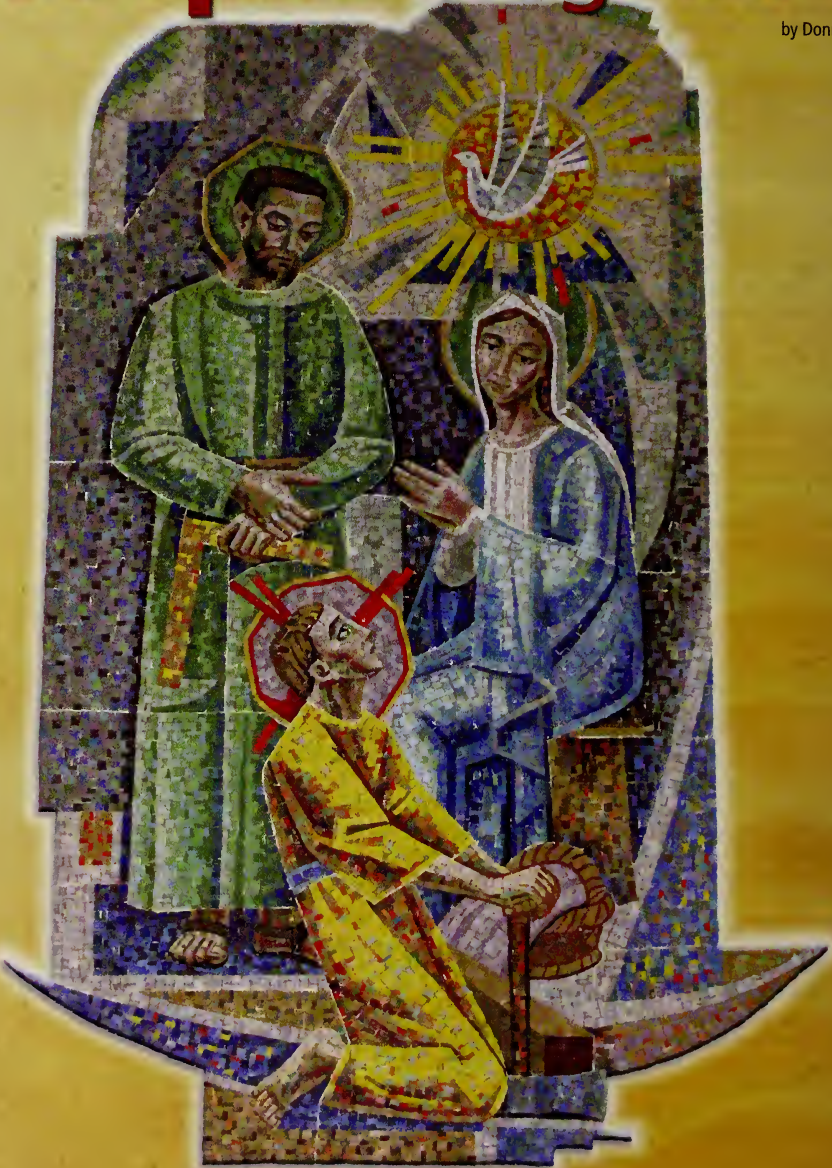
Every now and then we get to the place where an angelic person urges us to pursue radical justice and mercy that will make us appear foolish—and we say, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Jan Johnson is a free-lance writer and the author of Abundant Simplicity: Discovering the Unhurried Rhythms of Grace *(IVP Books, 2011).*

In response to Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph the righteous

by Donna Mast



Joseph was a man
An ordinary earn-your-living-with-your-hands kind of man.
A carpenter by trade.
Ah—but he was righteous.
How many of us could say the same?

When told his intended was pregnant with another's child
Joseph chose the quiet way.
Joseph chose to spare her humiliation.
Joseph chose to grant her life.

Would you, would I, have done the same?
When we have every human right to demand our rights.
I'm right. You're wrong.
You have wronged my rights.
You, not I, shall pay the humiliation price.

But not Joseph.
Joseph was a righteous man.
A soon-to-be-humiliated man.
A man who would humble himself
rather than see his intended humiliated
beyond her extended belly.
Joseph would pay the humiliation price in the jeers of the crowd.
"Hey there, Joseph, you righteous man, you.
Weren't you engaged to be married, Joseph?
Weren't you man enough to keep your woman, Joseph?
Weren't you man enough to keep your woman lusting after your own man-body?
And now, aren't you man enough to do the right societal thing?
Aren't you man enough to rally the community into a decent stoning?
Aren't you man enough to be a married man?
Hey there, Joseph, you righteous man, you."
But Joseph was a righteous man.
A man-enough-man to take on humiliation for the sake of another.

Joseph was a man
An ordinary earn-your-living-with-your-hands kind of man.
A carpenter by trade.
Ah—but he was dream-heeder.
How many of us could say the same?

When decision-heavy-weariness overtook him for the night
Joseph dreamed a dream.
Joseph dreamed receptively to God's messenger.
Joseph dreamed attentiveness to God's voice.

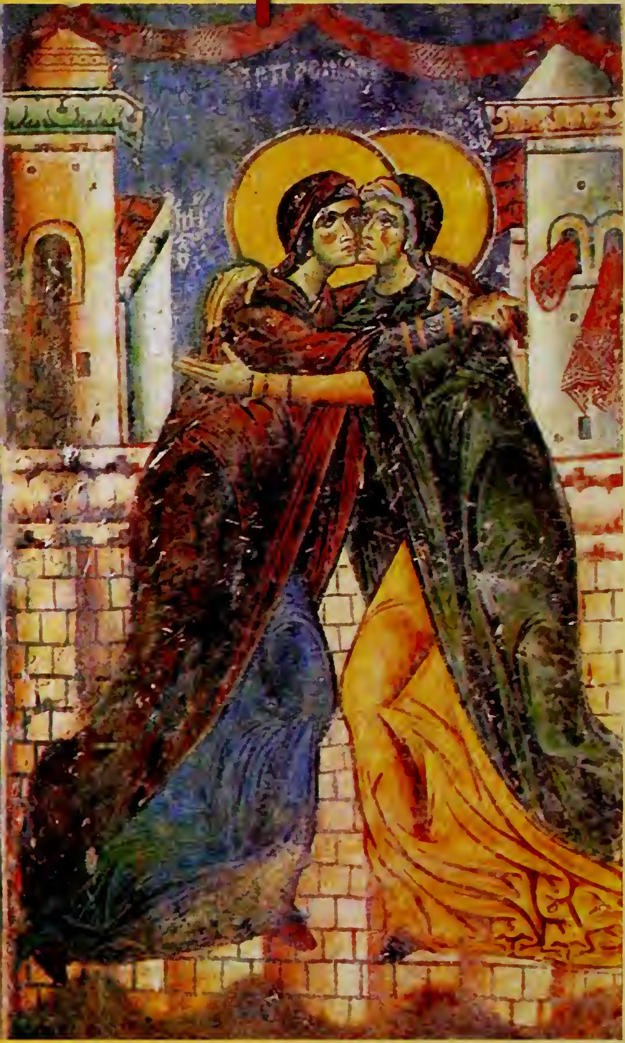
Would you, would I, have done the same?
Armed with human logic to explain away the dream—
dreams have no place in the light of day,
especially when they demand so illogic a course.
Father a child that isn't mine? Not likely.
Pregnant by the Holy Spirit? Impossible!
What do you take me for, a fool?!

But not Joseph.
Joseph was a righteous man.
A soon-to-be-a-father man.
A man who would travel an uncharted course rather than fail to live according to the intentions of a saving God.
Joseph would pay the price of fathering another's child.
He would marry his intended, yet remain celibate until after the birth.
He would accompany Mary through childbirth in a stable.
He would listen to the cries of a babe and hear himself cry "Holy."
He would choose the angel-name-choice and name the babe Jesus.
And later, he would listen to more dreams,
always choosing, for the sake of the baby, to follow the God-dream message.
For Joseph was a righteous man
A man-enough-man to take on fatherhood for the sake of another.
For the sake of generations of others.
For the sake of a world of others.
For the sake of you and me.

Joseph was a man
An ordinary earn-your-living-with-your-hands kind of man.
A carpenter by trade.
Ah—but he was righteous, a holy-dream-heeder.
How many of us could say the same?

Donna Mast is conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Surprised by **joy**



by Darrin W. Snyder Belousek

My soul magnifies the Lord, and
my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior… For the Mighty One has
done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
—Luke 1:46-49

This is Mary's great song of praise to God. Mary sings with joy because she has been surprised by God—"he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant." Mary has been favored by God's grace in a personal, intimate way—she is blessed with a child, God's own Son—and she sings with joy in thanksgiving for this wonderful thing God is doing. ▶

Like Mary, I love to sing—and to sing with joy. (Though I doubt I will ever be called "blessed" on account of my singing.) And I sing with joy because I, too, have known the surprising grace of God in a personal, intimate way.

Although I have loved to sing since childhood, I have not always sung with joy. For several years during my 20s there was no joy. I was one of those who "sit in darkness" beneath the shadow of fear, waiting for the Lord, watching for "the dawn from on high to break" (Psalm 130:5-6; Luke 1:78-79). Having wandered from the church, I was walking the shadowy vale alone.

I had been raised in a Christian home, where I was read Bible stories on my mother's lap, and we held daily family devotions. Every Sunday our family went to church (twice), where I was taught "the faith of our fathers" and was baptized a "believer" while yet a young child. At age 13, on graduation from eighth grade, I received a card from a family close to ours. In it the father, Harvey, had written this note: "May the great Triune God be enough for thee."

At the time I wanted so much for that to be true, but I wasn't sure I could simply say "yes" to it. Even as a youth I had a complex, inquisitive mind and tended to ask questions—too many for my parents' comfort. Looking back, I think that Harvey, who knew me well, recognized that it would be a struggle for me to be satisfied with the simplicity of faith.

Now I was in college and, like most young adults, wanted to chart my own course—in life and in faith. I didn't want to reject God or even Christianity. At the same time I couldn't accept God on the terms of the Christianity I had known as a child.

So I went off in quest of my own salvation—to seek salvation for myself, by myself. I read the ancient philosophers, the existentialist writers, even books on Zen Buddhism. I cultivated solitude in an effort to be "authentic." I wrote poetry to express and embrace the "fear and trembling" of a lone pilgrim on an unmarked path.

I eventually came to the conclusion that it would not be enough for me to "pull myself up out of nothingness" and "will an authentic life." To truly live I needed not only to be free from fear but also from guilt. Beyond that, I needed to know that love was real and that there was something to hope for. All this, however, I could not do for myself—indeed, it was my "self" that needed saving.

I was lost and knew it, but I didn't know how to find the way back home. I prayed through poetry—for faith, for hope, for redemption. The traditional spiritual tells my story: "When I was a seeker, I sought both night and day. I prayed the Lord to help me, and he showed me the way." Two years passed, however, before I saw the first light of dawn.

In the meantime, I had begun doctoral studies at the University of Notre Dame, where there's a crucifix in every classroom, "Our Lady" adorns the "Golden Dome" and a 10-story "Touchdown Jesus" flanks the library. In an ironic twist of divine providence, there in the midst of my self-chosen exile from the church I found myself surrounded by the church—the Catholic Church.

I was lost and knew it, but I didn't know how to find the way back home.

This was the last place I would ever have expected to receive grace and find salvation—every instinct from my fundamentalist upbringing rebelled at the very thought.

My redemption from exile began one day in the summer after my first year. Deirdre, a fellow student, saw me eating lunch alone and invited me to join a group of her friends. Reluctantly, I did. She introduced me to Jeanne, Joan and Tim.

I began joining them for lunch and soon realized these were not only people I wanted to know but were the friends I needed. They had what I was longing for—faith and hope—and something more besides, joy. Yet they were Catholics, devout Catholics. Wasn't Catholicism legalistic and graceless? How could they be both faithful Catholics and joyful people? At times I doubted what I was seeing was real.

Despite my doubts and fears, over the next two years these four friends led me back to faith and wooed me back to the church through the gentle love and gracious hospitality of genuine friendship. They were evangelical Catholics in the truest sense of "evangelical"—they believed the Christian faith was good news and that the church was home on earth and so were intent on sharing their faith with others and inviting them to join the family of God.

Dawn broke clear on a Sunday morning in September. Light suffused the room, filling my heart and my head. In a moment, I was sure that God was near and love was real, for I had seen both through my friends. Fear fled. And then, unsought and unexpected, joy flooded my soul.

During the weeks and months following, I was visibly joyful, a difference in demeanor my friends could not help but notice. "What's happened to you?" they asked. When I shared my story, we rejoiced together, as did the shepherd with his friends when he had brought home the one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7).

> When I shared my story, we rejoiced together, as did the shepherd with his friends when he had brought home the one lost sheep.

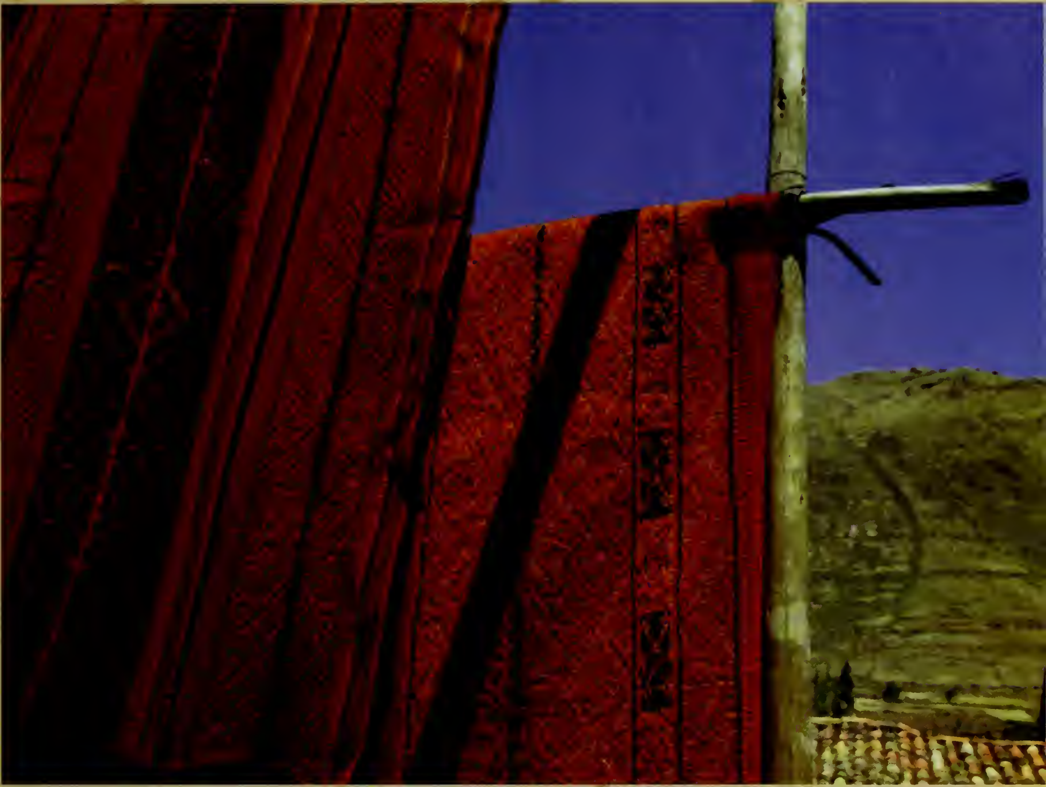
As Advent arrived, I wanted nothing more than to sing:

"Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart."

So have I sung with joy since. I sing with joy because, as Zechariah had sung, God has looked with favor and redeemed me—setting me free from fear and sin, free to serve him in righteousness and holiness all my days (Luke 1:68-77).

Darrin W. Snyder Belousek is a member of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, Ohio, where he shared this testimony in worship during Advent 2010. He serves on the board of Bridgefolk, a Mennonite-Catholic ecumenical organization.

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., is a church with an art gallery.



Grant Rissler exhibited this photo at the Parrot Gallery in 2010.

ART for community's sake

by Chad Martin

At Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (CMCL), an overhaul of the ground floor church fellowship area has been exceptional.

A jazz group performs at the Parrot Gallery.
Photo provided

Not many years ago it was adorned with stained carpet, chipped tabletops and dinged walls due to increasingly dilapidated room dividers. Now, clean walls, new carpet and warm lighting, accompanied by a cozy library, help showcase original artwork created by members of the congregation.

In October 2009, the Parrot Gallery (named after the church's mascot of sorts) at CMCL opened to the public just in time for the Fall Arts Walk in Lancaster, Pa. By joining in that weekend featuring over 100 exhibits in venues all over town, the congregation embarked on an exciting new program to share the creative endeavors of its own artists with each other and with its neighborhood. Art gallery? In a church? This may sound paradoxical, but for CMCL it is no fluke. This new project is a natural outgrowth of the church's core values and its presence in the community.

When planners circulated a preliminary gallery schedule, artists—all regular participants in the church—stepped forward and filled up nearly two years worth of exhibits.

The history

For most of its 25-year journey, CMCL has embraced and celebrated the visual, musical and literary arts as vital gifts of the church.

In 1989, Mary Lou Weaver Houser encouraged the formation of Art Spirit, a support group for those interested in the arts and spirituality. The group continued meeting regularly until 1996 and included 50-plus participants. A core group of participants were CMCL members. But many came from beyond the congregation. Art Spirit met monthly for conversation, critique, studio activities, field trips and annual public exhibits on Art Sunday.

At that time, Lancaster was beginning to coordinate gallery-walk events twice a year, and CMCL participated in this effort. The sanctuary was transformed into a makeshift gallery space for a weekend at a time. Worship happened amid the art.

On Art Sundays, Vern Rempel, a jazz pianist and CMCL's first pastor, preached lively sermons, sometimes espousing the arts as "the angel of CMCL." He argued the arts are like messengers of God to us and to the world. Poetry, painting and music are some of the best ways CMCL knows how to communicate something of God to the world. They are like attending spirits among the congregation, radiating God's presence.

Throughout the years, this view of the arts has not diminished. When a few participants first decided to float the idea of creating an art gallery in the church, almost immediately artists volunteered with enthusiasm. When planners circulated a preliminary gallery schedule, artists—all regular participants in the church—stepped forward and filled up nearly two years worth of exhibits. With that first tentative sign-up sheet, a dream took form.

The dream

Robert Wuthnow, a widely respected sociologist of religion in the United States, has written about the importance of the arts for the vitality of churches. He interviewed hundreds of people and conducted a national survey on the arts and religion. He concluded there is a profound correlation between personal faith and positive experiences with the arts.

In his book *All in Sync: How Music and Art are Revitalizing American Religion* (University of California Press, 2003), Wuthnow claims that "for artistic interests to benefit the nation's churches and synagogues, then, religious organizations must channel these interests in ways that encourage serious commitment to spiritual growth and, in turn, involvement in congregations. ... The lion's share has to be done through congregations, small groups, retreat centers, publishing efforts and other vehicles by which the public comes into contact with organized religion."

To be vital to people's spiritual longing and seeking, the church must embrace and promote the arts. CMCL's Parrot Gallery is, in a sense, a direct response to this phenomenon. The congregation has experienced the deep-running connection between vital spirituality and affirmation of the arts within its common life.

Printmaker Beky Weidner, reflecting on this vision says, "Allowing a space to display the creative works of our church community acknowledges that not only are the visual arts important but they belong in the church."

CMCL feels a calling to celebrate, support and deepen this connection in its wider community. In a sense, this is a sacred calling. "The arts represent our most colorful form of hospitality," notes Weaver Houser. "We are meeting neighbors who have never before visited a Mennonite congregation."

The gallery also serves an inward purpose for the community. The Parrot Gallery provides exhibit space specifically for CMCL artists. Giving special attention to our own artists has made the gallery a vital way to support individuals within the congregation.

The gallery has added a new way to share personal stories. In church life, some are gifted to share in worship through music, preaching or prayer. But others communicate best through pictures and images.

As potter, Phil Kreider, who is a nurse in his "day job," explains, "Being able to do this at church, I was able to share something about myself that many people didn't know about me."

Another artist, Naomi Paine, exhibited artwork when she was new to the congregation. Her experience helped welcome her into the church as a full participant.

"Since my exhibit focused on spiritual experiences I had on a 30-day silent retreat, I felt vulnerable in sharing it," she says. "Responses were positive, though, and I was blessed by revisiting that pivotal time in my life."

This gesture of welcome and support for artists is the heart of the vision for the Parrot Gallery. As artist and gallery committee member Susanne Mundok, puts it: "The Parrot Gallery has given many artists at CMCL who either have never shown their work or have not shown in a long time the opportunity to do so in a space that is both familiar and comfortable. Showing one's work sometimes gives a reluctant artist the clarification and legitimacy they need to continue confidently on their creative journey."

The future

The Parrot Gallery at CMCL has opened a door to creative programming and new forms of relationship. With a couple years of practice, the nuts and bolts of setting up exhibits and hosting receptions is becoming routine. And gallery planners are actively dreaming next steps. Some artists have hosted informal gallery "chats" where visitors can learn more about the artwork. Kreider taught a mini-workshop on making clay tiles for youngsters in the congregation.

> We are meeting neighbors who have never before visited a Mennonite congregation.
> —Mary Lou Weaver Houser

Gallery planners hope the artwork will increasingly be seen as a resource in the broader life of the congregation. Perhaps the gallery can become a place for Sunday school lessons, youth group conversations or spiritual retreat. These are some of the exiting possibilities emerging in the Parrot Gallery.

Naomi Paine with her paintings at the Parrot Gallery. Photo provided

Weaver Houser casts a vision transcending any given program or moment in the life of the church. "The Spirit's energy breathes through our bones and brings to life things unimaginable for our healing. And so we paint, sing, write, dance, design, build, garden." Particular programs such as Art Spirit or the Parrot Gallery may come and go. But an angel is on the move.

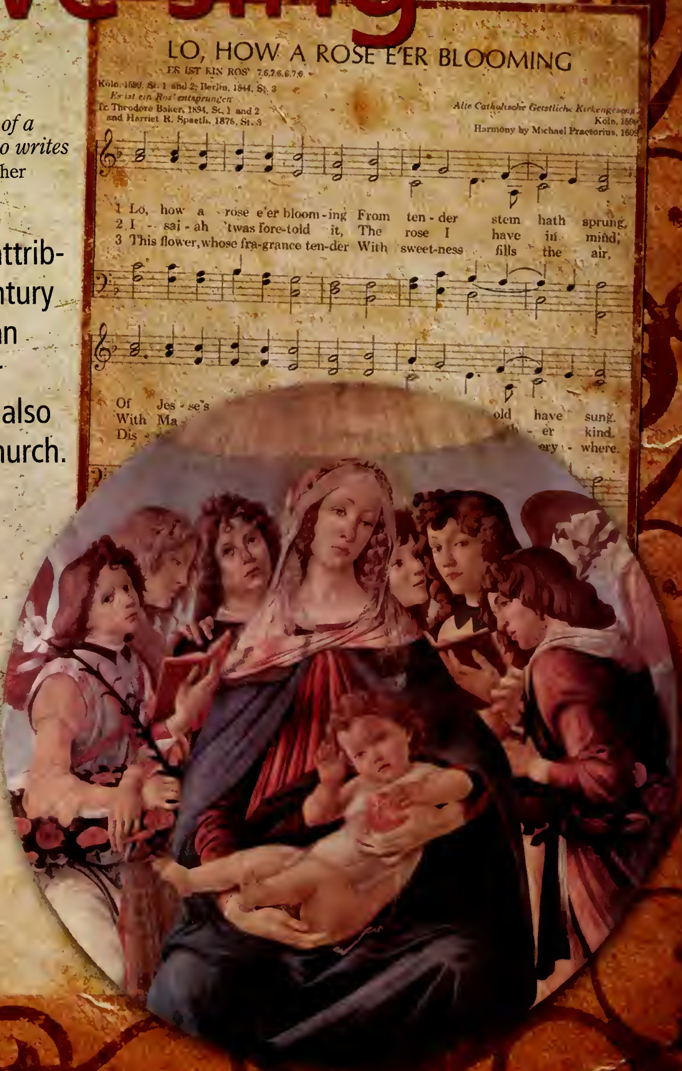
Chad Martin is associate pastor of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., and a part-time potter. His recent artwork is on exhibit in the Parrot Gallery.

The words we sing

by Christine Longhurst

> *Let me write the songs of a nation; I don't care who writes its laws.*—Andrew Fletcher

This statement attributed to 17th-century Scottish politician Andrew Fletcher about countries also applies to the church. Christians have long recognized the power of music to shape what we believe about God and the life of faith. ▶


LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING
ES IST EIN ROS' 7.6.7.6.6.7.6.
Koln, 1599, St. 1 and 2; Berlin, 1844, St. 3
Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen
Tr. Theodore Baker, 1894, St. 1 and 2
and Harriet R. Spaeth, 1875, St. 3
Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesang
Koln, 1599
Harmony by Michael Praetorius, 1609
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing From ten-der stem hath sprung,
2 I-sai-ah 'twas fore-told it, The rose I have in mind;
3 This flower, whose fra-grance ten-der With sweet-ness fills the air,
Of Jes-se's
With Ma
Dis
old have sung.
er kind.
ery - where.

Showing care for the words of our conversation with God in worship

As New Testament scholar Gordon Fee once said, "Show me a church's songs, and I'll show you their theology."

If this is true—and I believe it is—why do we seem to pay so little attention to the texts of the songs we sing?

In many congregations, far more attention is focused on the musical style of our worship songs than on the words we sing. We debate the merits of traditional hymns, gospel songs, praise and worship music, and songs of the global church. We argue over the use of praise bands and organs, unison singing and four-part harmony. Many of us are so focused on musical style that we've even named our services accordingly: We speak of contemporary, traditional or blended worship.

In all the workshops and seminars I do, people often want to talk about musical style. The question of the text—the words we sing—rarely comes up.

Historically, the word "hymn" referred to the words of a song. Hymns were poems of faith. Early hymnals resembled books of poetry and rarely included music. Tunes were interchangeable and often used for a variety of texts. The practice of "interlining" the words of a text between the lines of music wasn't generally done until the late 19th century and then primarily in North America.

There's no question that music is important. But how carefully does your congregation choose the song texts they use in worship? Who evaluates the words you sing? How healthy and balanced are your textual choices? What might be missing?

Consider some of these questions:

To whom are we singing?

How clearly do our songs identify the God to whom we sing? I recall being part of a worship service in which God was not clearly named until the start of the sermon. In all the songs and comments to that point, God was referred to simply as "you." As worshippers, we were left to draw our own conclusions about who this God was that we were singing to.

And what about the triune nature of God? Are the songs we're singing rooted in our understanding of the trinitarian nature and activity of God?

A few years ago, Lester Ruth, professor of worship at Asbury Seminary, studied 72 top contemporary songs used in North American worship over a 15-year period. He discovered that only three of the 72 songs referred to all three persons of the Trinity. Four songs referred to God as Father, and only six referred to the Spirit. Jesus was named most often, appearing in 32 songs.

Robin Wallace, professor of worship at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, discovered much the same thing in a similar study. Of the 47 texts he looked at, 11 songs addressed God as an ambiguous "you." Almost half the texts made no direct reference to Jesus or any part of his life, death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit was only mentioned in five songs.

How well do our songs reflect the trinitarian nature of God?

How well do our songs reflect the trinitarian nature of God? Does it matter if a majority of the songs we sing are directed toward only one or another of the Trinity? What difference might that make to what we believe about God, or about how God is at work in our world?

Who is singing?

One of the characteristics of contemporary worship music is the focus on "I" in worship songs—songs that reflect private religious feeling and express the desires and commitments of individual worshippers rather than the gathered community.

This isn't a new phenomenon; we can find numerous examples of "I" hymns from centuries past. What's worth noticing today, however, is that these songs are now surrounded by a larger worship culture that increasingly understands the life of faith as an individual journey. For many today, weekly worship is not seen to be a corporate activity—a conversation between God and the gathered community. Instead, it's seen as a private encounter—a conversation between God and me. We may all be gathered in the same room for worship, but the conversations are often private ones.

As Anabaptists, we believe the faith Jesus calls us to is not simply a private, solitary faith. It is faith lived out in community. As Tertullian, a church leader from the fourth century, wrote, "One Christian is no Christian."

How well do our worship songs reflect this reality? Do we have a healthy balance of "I" and "we" songs in our worship?

What do we sing about?

How well do we balance songs about God's nature and attributes (faithful, holy, loving) with songs about God's actions in history (creation, incarnation, redemption)?

We've all heard people comment about the shallowness of contemporary worship music. In my experience, the shallowness people sometimes experience is directly related to a lack of balance between songs about God's attributes and God's activity. Singing about God's faithfulness wears thin unless we remember the ways God has been faithful. Our praise and worship of God is best rooted in our recognition of what God has done.

In the same way, it's important to balance songs of revelation with songs of response. One of the best gifts contemporary Praise and Worship music has brought to the church has been the gift of response—songs that offer worshippers a chance to sing directly to God instead of primarily singing about God. But an exclusive diet of response songs can lead to worship that is more about me and how I feel about God than it is about who God is and what God has done.

Our praise and worship of God is best rooted in our recognition of what God has done.

On the other hand, if we just sing songs of revelation—songs that point us to some objective truth about who God is and how God has acted—but rarely have a chance to respond to what that truth means in our lives, then our worship can easily remain at the level of information only and never bring us to a place where real transformation can happen.

Songs of revelation naturally lead to songs of response. A healthy diet of worship music seeks to balance revelation and response.

Balance is also important when it comes to the range of emotion expressed in the songs we sing. Praise is important, but if we want our relationship with God to be honest, praise alone isn't enough. Our worship needs to make room for a wide range of emotion and response.

There's also the matter of balancing the imminence (nearness) of God with God's transcendence (otherness). Both views of God are true: God is both companion and Creator. How well do our song texts hold these truths in tension with one another—intimacy and awe—so that God is neither too approachable nor completely out of reach? How well do our overall song choices balance texts such as, "O Lord, You're beautiful, Your face is all I seek" with texts such as, "Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes"?

Textual diversity tied to musical diversity

Like it or not, the texts we sing are directly related to musical style. Different musical styles bring with them different kinds of texts. My own decision to use a variety of musical styles in worship is not based primarily on musical considerations but on a concern for the texts that accompany those different styles.

An exclusive diet of Praise and Worship songs is not enough. Neither is an exclusive diet of traditional hymns or contemporary hymns or songs from Taize, the Iona Community or the global church.

Healthy worship draws on a wide variety of textual (and therefore musical) styles. It seeks to balance objective texts about who God is and what God has done with subjective texts that offer worshippers a chance to respond personally to God. It tries to balance topical texts that explore biblical themes and contemporary issues with contemplative texts that allow worshippers simply to spend time in God's presence.

Healthy worship includes scriptural texts, traditional texts and newly composed contemporary texts. It balances finely crafted poetic texts to which we can return again and again with colloquial texts written in the immediacy of the moment without regard to literary quality.

It values texts that speak to God, texts that speak to one another and texts through which God speaks to us. It seeks to include texts from both the global Christian community and our local Christian communities.

Just as in conversations with one another, our dialogue with God is enriched by a wide diversity of content and style, both textual and musical.

If our worship is to rise above mere entertainment or education—if we truly believe that worship is a conversation between God and God's people—then the words of that conversation need to be chosen with great care.

Christine Longhurst is a sessional instructor at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and regularly leads workshops on worship across Canada. She has a blog for worship planners and leaders: http://re-worship.blogspot.ca. This article was commissioned by Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite editors.

Mennonites have long debated what constitutes appropriate worship music. Many people like singing hymns because of their sentimental value. ("I don't know why I like to hear this music in church; I just do.") Yet sentimentality should not be the reason we sing. On the one hand, it obscures the reality and difficulties of the past, covering everything in a nostalgic glow. On the other, it leads to apathy and inaction, since anything different will never be as good as what is familiar. ▶

Cultivating Transcendence

by John Eicher

This sentimentality fosters passivity in our worship because we are going through the motions in order to achieve a planned emotional outcome. Ultimately, if we are praising God passively, then we are not really praising him at all. We are merely praising a past we are trying to hold on to.

It is important to note that sentimentality has more to do with the singer than with any particular genre of music. One can be sentimental about rock, rap, folk ballads or hymns. This may lead some to believe that creating the right mix of genres will lead to a happy outcome in our worship services. Yet when we combine sentimentality with egalitarianism, we open the door to any musical expression so long as someone feels good about it. Instead, sentimentality should be neither encouraged nor balanced. Instead, we should actively engage our music, singing songs that challenge us, inspire us and lose us in their beauty.

We should actively engage our music, singing songs that challenge us, inspire us and lose us in their beauty.

Yet active participation requires discernment. To do this we must understand how our music relates to art. Conventional wisdom holds that art is entirely subjective. According to this logic, no one has the right to say what is good or bad art or what is good or bad worship music. Ultimately, all that matters is whether everyone feels good about singing something and is somehow led to Christ. But this is an individualistic and utilitarian way of engaging the problem. It is individualistic because it requires us to adopt endless variations in the hope that we will somehow appeal to everyone's tastes. This may lead to "alternative services" and declining attendance. The community is sacrificed at the expense of the individual. It is utilitarian because it emphasizes the "ends" (personal salvation) over the "means" (unity of worship). While the former breaks down the community to countless individual preferences, the latter requires us to play a numbers game, bent on winning souls by any means necessary.

One of the Mennonite church's greatest traditions—and perhaps its greatest theological asset—is that we recognize the value of the local, gathered community over the individualism and pragmatism that pervades our consumerist and democratic society. This emphasis compels us to recognize that the "ends"—be they community-building, peacemaking or praising God—must yield to the "means" of achieving them. Our challenge is not to find the right balance between individualism and pragmatism but to transcend both of these with music that allows for multiple entry points, regardless of age or ethnicity.

Our traditions leave us ill equipped to understand how this relates to how the church uses art in its worship services. Traditionally, Mennonites were suspicious of art because it was commissioned and cultivated by those in power. But if we refuse to consider the implications of how the church uses art, then we will either shun it (as we used to) or stumble down the purely democratic path of "I'm OK, you're OK" spiritual expressions and sentimental lethargy. After all, high artistic standards are the reason we borrowed most of the songs in our hymnals from other Christian denominations.

The church needs to think more about how our art influences our spirituality. In doing so, we will learn that spiritual expression follows directly from artistic expression. This will allow us to appreciate the spiritual and artistic traditions of other faith communities. Good art—good music—is not the exclusive domain of dead white men. It welcomes all, either in its interpretation or expression, and may be found in every culture. Granted, the history of the Mennonite church makes our musical heritage lean heavily on the white, male demographic, but we cannot change our past. We can only guide our future.

Therefore, we should celebrate any music that emphasizes community and encourages a diversity of interpretations and entry points. There are many new songs that meet this criterion, and we should be singing them. But the burden of proof always lies on what is new and not on what has been tested. The three examples below—two old, one new—each demonstrate a different aspect of the type of music we should be singing. The first is thematically complex, the second emphasizes unity through diversity, and the third allows for spontaneity. Each of these elements is a component of good art and promotes strong community.

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" contains

AMBS

inside this issue

2 Challenges for us in the book of Jonah
Alumni News
3 Immersed in the Scriptures
Your gifts at work
4 President's Window

Fall 2011
Volume 22 Issue 1

AMBS window

Accompanied by Jonah

Allan Rudy-Froese, Ph.D. candidate, Assistant Professor of Christian Proclamation

Jonah has stuck with me since childhood. Like most kids staring at the standard Jonah picture book, I was curious—and more than just a little afraid—about the prospect of being eaten by a whale and sitting for three slimy, stinky, yet prayerful days leaning on a gigantic spleen.

Jonah stayed with me as a teenager but I was less enthralled by the contours of the whale's inner workings and more bent on argument. Really? Can a guy stay in the belly of the whale for three days? If this story is not "true," then which other stories in the Bible also are fanciful tales? Some years later, as a lonely young adult away from all that was familiar, I found myself speaking to God with Jonah's prayer. I too was falling—going down down down—and Jonah had just the right words for my prayer.

Jonah accompanied me to college, seminary and graduate school. I discovered in the academy that Jonah's story has captivated and delighted Jews, Christians and Muslims for millennia. It was not only the theologians, historians and scholars of sacred texts who were interested; spinners of stories have found this short book inspiring: Jonah bargaining on the deck of a doomed ship, praying in belly of the whale, preaching in Nineveh and arguing with God begs to be imagined anew in every place and time.

Jonah, as scholar Yvonne Sherwood states, has had an amazing "after life." There are myriads of allusions to Jonah in western literature, visual art, music and more recently in film. It is hard to resist a story which has a fast-moving plot, a motley cast of characters, a guy who gets swallowed by a whale and lives, and a God who continues to pursue an unpredictable prophet.

Jonah continues to accompany me when I serve as resource person for church retreats, work with ministers and students, and sometimes when I preach. Reading Jonah out loud, acting out scenes from the story and mining the historical occasion of Jonah is not only entertaining but carries us to lively discussions and a deeper understanding of faith. There is so much here: human frailty, prayer, confession, repentance, jealousy and disgust toward the "other." In Jonah we get to sort out the similarities and differences between story, parable, poetry, prophesy, comedy and tragedy. Last but not least we see and experience God's amazing and disorienting grace.

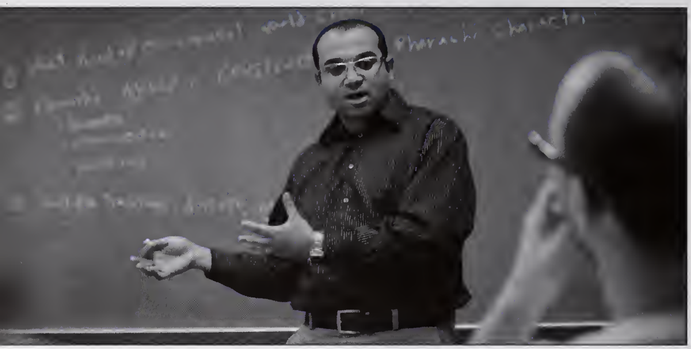
Jonah the prophet can be faulted on many fronts, but he did get something right. It is just a little line said at the bottom of the sea in the belly of the whale, but it still needs to be proclaimed: "Salvation belongs to God." ●

Photo: Lydia Nofziger, new student from Archbold, Ohio, and Allan Rudy-Froese confer about fall classes. To learn more about Allan, visit www.ambs.edu/about/faculty/Rudy-Froese-Allan

AMBS Window is a publication of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary ~ www.ambs.edu

Challenges for us in the book of Jonah

Safwat Marzouk, Ph.D. candidate, Assistant Professor of Old Testament



The book of Jonah engages God's relationship with non-Israelites in a unique way when compared with other books of the Old Testament. The non-Israelites who are usually represented as Israel's enemy, oppressors, subject to divine judgment, or are portrayed as a tool used by God to punish Israel, are now the subject of divine mercy and compassion. God sends the prophet Jonah to Nineveh initially to proclaim to the Ninevites the pending divine judgment as a just response to their wickedness.

For an unstated reason the prophet decides not to go to Nineveh; instead he goes the opposite direction, to Tarshish. While some think that Jonah did not want to go because he is nationalistic, others think that Jonah was concerned about his prophetic ministry: God sends him to proclaim a message of judgment, then God relents, and Jonah would appear to be a false prophet whose prophetic words of judgment did not come to pass.

The prophet's flight to Tarshish brings danger and transformation to the sailors who were facing the threat of death as God stirred the wind of the sea because Jonah was on the boat. Unlike Jonah who was seeking to flee from the presence of the LORD (1:3), the sailors acknowledge the presence of the LORD in the midst of the sea; they feared the LORD, prayed and offered sacrifices (1:10, 14, 16). Despite the danger of drowning and sinking, these non-Israelites initially worked very hard to avoid throwing Jonah in the midst of the sea. They were concerned for the well-being of the source of their troubles.

When Jonah finally made it to Nineveh, he cried out: "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (3:4) The prophet's message is very succinct and obscure. The Hebrew word translated "overthrown" could denote a positive meaning—"overturned"—or a negative one—"destroyed." The meaning of the message does not just lie in the sender and the words, but also in how the audience responds to it.

The people of Nineveh believed in God; these outsiders determined the meaning of the message by their repentance. The Ninevite king preached a longer message of repentance than the one proclaimed by Jonah! The king is hoping that "God may relent and change his mind."

The Ninevites changed, and now it was God's turn to change. The reader is soon informed that God "changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it." (3:10) The compassionate and merciful character of God that is usually preached to the Israelites (Joel 2:13-14) is now experienced by the Ninevites (Jonah 4:1-2).

The sailors' acknowledgment of the presence of God in the midst of the sea and God's compassionate and merciful response to the repentance of the Ninevites challenge us as readers of the Old Testament, who always deem the non-Israelites as outside the circle of the divine mercy and compassion. ●

Photo: Safwat Marzouk teaches a course on Exodus this fall. To learn more about Safwat, visit www.ambs.edu/about/faculty/marzouk-safwat

alumni news

Willard Swartley (Bachelor of Divinity 1962, faculty 1978–2004, professor emeritus) is a contributor to *Preaching God's Transforming Justice: A Lectionary Commentary, Year B, Featuring 22 New Holy Days for Justice,* published by Westminster John Knox Press. This work is the first to help preachers focus on implications for social justice in every biblical reading in the Revised Common Lectionary. Twenty-two Holy Days for Justice are introduced, enlarging the church's awareness of God's call for justice.

Ordinations

Jennifer Eriksen Morales (Master of Divinity 2007), May 15, for work as conference LEADership Minister with Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes (Master of Divinity 2005) May 29, Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Christina Litwiller (Master of Divinity 2009) June 26, Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Paula Killough (Master of Divinity 2008) June 5, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, for work with Mennonite Mission Network

Adam Tice (Master of Arts in Christian Formation 2007) June 12, Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Renee Kanagy (Master of Divinity, 2008), Sept. 25, New Creation Fellowship, Newton, Kan. ●

Immersed in Scripture

In addition to the curriculum for masters programs, AMBS offers this wide variety of biblical teaching and resources.

Institute of Mennonite Studies

www.ambs.edu/programs-institutes/ims/new-releases

Youth Ministry at a Crossroads: Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth

Andy Brubacher Kaethler and Bob Yoder, editors; copublished with Herald Press, 2011

"When young people realize that in holding the Bible ... they are holding a treasure that has been preserved for them across time, and when they realize that this treasure is ... understandable and authoritative, they will be on their way to a lasting faith."
– Preston Frederic Bush

Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom: The Legacy of Alan and Eleanor Kreider

James R. Krabill and Stuart Murray, editors; copublished with Herald Press, 2011

"We need scripture to enlarge our imagination and to expand our faith, as time and time again we get to exclaim—See! See what happened here and what God has done! Scripture gives us permission to dream daringly about a new heaven and a new earth."
– Sian Murray Williams

Take our moments and our days: An Anabaptist prayer book

Vol. 1, Ordinary time; Vol. 2, Advent through Pentecost

Daily services are filled with "scripture-saturated prayer."
www.ambs.edu/prayerbook

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology

Volume 11 Number 2: Teaching the Bible in the congregation; copublished with Canadian Mennonite University

Mary Schertz, editor of this issue, notes she is "on a journey to discover ways we can together read the Bible as if our lives depended on it."
www.mennovision.org/Volume11-2.htm

Church Leadership Center

Pastors Week, January 23–26, 2012
Understanding Revelation for Today

Presenter: Loren L. Johns with a session by Nelson Kraybill

Pastors Week will look at how the mysterious message of Revelation can shape our preaching, teaching and daily life nearly two millennia later.
www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek

Leading God's People

Curriculum for Pastoral Studies Distance Education and the Journey program

Unit 2, The Biblical Story, offers a Bible survey, with the goal of helping students describe the thread of biblical history ("salvation history") and major themes and trajectories of the Bible.
www.ambs.edu/programs-institutes/clc/leading-gods-people

Online course—Spring 2012

Biblical Foundations of Peace and Justice

Taught by Mary H. Schertz, Ph.D., Professor of New Testament (3 credit hours)
Register by Jan. 3 to receive a discount

The Bible bears witness to the Holy Warrior God and the prophet who decries peace without justice, the Jesus who came not to bring peace but a sword, as well as the Jesus who weeps over Jerusalem. This class examines biblical passages for reflecting on peace and justice praxis today.
www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/spring

Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore

The bookstore at AMBS has Bibles, Bible study aids and commentaries within its inventory of 3,000 titles.
www.ambs.edu/bookstore

AMBS Library

The Studer Bible Collection, gathered by Gerald Studer, is featured in the AMBS Library. It includes Bibles in many languages, translations and versions.
www.ambs.edu/library ●

The seminary community recently celebrated the release of *Youth Ministry at a Crossroads* with editors Bob Yoder and Andy Brubacher Kaethler.

Your gifts at work

"Journey: **A Conference-based Leadership Development Program** is meeting an important need among bi-vocational ministers," Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, associate dean for leadership education, said. "Most people in the program combine jobs and ministry assignments. We repeatedly hear that Journey is helping to form and deepen Anabaptist identity among these people who have been called into leadership by their congregations"

The program currently involves 16 mentees and 11 mentors, including Janice Wagner from Engadine, Mich. (left). Ten mentees came to the Mennonite church as adults, so their experiences in Journey are orienting them to the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and to their calling in ministry.

Journey is coordinated by the AMBS Church Leadership Center and is cosponsored with Central District and Indiana-Michigan Conferences. ●

AMBS

AMBS Window
Fall 2011
Volume 22 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker
Photos: Peter Ringenberg and Mark Gingerich

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

Keep in touch with AMBS

Keep up with AMBS on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/followAMBS (Click "Like" next to our name so you can get regular updates.)

See the AMBS photo gallery to watch progress on the renovation of our Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount.

Subscribe to the AMBS calendar www.ambs.edu/calendars/events

A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517-1999
574 295-3726
www.ambs.edu
advancement@ambs.edu

President's Window

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

I grew up with two storyteller parents—who regaled us with tales about when "I was a little boy" or when "I was a little girl." They also told lots of Bible stories about people who in puzzling ways heard God's call and dared to take risks.

My parents liberally used biblical wisdom to spice their parental advice. They rejoiced when a "contemporary" version of the Bible came out and bought us each our own copy. When dull Bible teachers or boring preachers didn't do the magnificent Scriptures justice, they fiercely advocated for better-educated preachers and teachers.

Now, as a seminary president, I look back on that early formation in my family with profound gratitude. I heard the music and poetry of the biblical narratives through my parent's dramatic storytelling. I heard the mystery of the Word of God in their respectful reverence—thankfully echoed by many other fine teachers and preachers over the years.

I've also heard, however, biblical stories manipulated into mind-numbing caricatures and flattened into bland uniformity. I've observed how code words are used to flush out folks not clear enough about the authority of the Bible. I've listened as biblical poetry is reduced to stick-figure literalisms and its mystery to abstract propositions.

In some circles, it seems that the Bible is meant to function like a well-engineered machine, and our job is to keep tinkering until its perfect harmonization convinces people that it truly is the Word of God. Instead, the Bible confounds us with its complexity, conflicting perspectives and diversity of voices, cultures and visions. One pastor told me recently, quoting one congregant while saying he speaks for others as well: "I have real trouble with this Bible!"

For all kinds of reasons, many of us have "trouble" with the Bible. I am immensely pleased that at AMBS, we don't just have "Biblical" in our name. We have excellent Bible faculty who know how to face the "trouble" head-on. Not only do they love to teach the Bible, but they are also wise guides into its multi-splendored beauty and its astonishing ability to reveal God to us. ●

panorama

2012 Lectureships

Peace and Justice Guest: Carolyn Holderread Heggen, Feb. 28–March 2. Her visit will include a daylong workshop on Feb. 29, "Healing the spiritual sounds of war." **www.ambs.edu/workshops**

Theological Lectureship: Marlene Kropf and Daniel Schipani, March 27–29. Focus on spiritual formation, particularly among groups with diversity in culture and race.

Chapel renovation continues

The Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount will now include a larger foyer with an elevator and main floor restrooms. The existing space will have greater energy efficiency. See the changes as they unfold in the gallery at **www.facebook.com/followAMBS**

Spring online courses

Register by Jan. 3 to receive a discount on the following online classes:

- **Turnaround Strategies for Churches,** taught by Gerald Shenk
- **Biblical Foundations of Peace and Justice,** taught by Mary H. Schertz

Webinars bring resources to you

- **Re-forming Anabaptism,** Nov. 1, with Joanna Shenk
- **Lent Planning,** Feb. 2, with Marlene Kropf and Rosanna McFadden
- **What's Mennonite about the missional church?** March 8, with Lois Barrett
- **Doing theology as thriving rural communities,** March 21, with David Boshart ●

two interwoven themes. The first is about wandering and returning ("Let thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to thee"), and the second is about the inability of humans to adequately praise God ("Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above"). These themes come together in the last verse with the lyrics:

"O that day when freed from sinning
I shall see thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing thy sovereign grace."

This song is also about humility ("I cannot proclaim it well"), or it could be read in light of its biblical references: "the mount," "flaming tongues," "here I raise my Ebenezer." It does not have a single interpretation but can be returned to again and again according to the changing needs of the community. This thematic complexity is a reflection of the infinite complexity of God. Although our best attempts at capturing God's infinite wonder will always fall short of the mark—as the author of "Come Thou Fount" realized—we should never stop trying. Concerns over "diversity" along political or social lines (such as race, sex, age, economic class or sexual orientation) fall away in the face of music that unifies through its complexity. We only need to remain curious, attentive and thoughtful and learn to recognize it when we see it.

A second example—and perhaps the most compelling argument for singing four-part harmonies—can be found in the quintessential Mennonite song, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Although the lyrics are simple and repetitive, its value is affirmed by the distinct place given to each voice in the community, whether bass, tenor, alto or soprano. Like "Come Thou Fount," it is a song that unifies through its complexity. "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" achieves this unity through diversity in its composition and not its lyrics. It neither reduces everyone to the same melody nor focuses attention on a small group of people with amplified instruments. This song allows everyone to participate, projecting its strength through its multiple, overlapping harmonies.

Looking to the new, "Rivers of Babylon" is a song with communal implications that are more implied than structured. This song is about exile and wandering, two themes familiar to the Mennonite story. The first verse asks the question, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" The answer does not come in the form of explicit instructions or the incantation of a creed but through a humble petition that our words and meditations will be acceptable in the sight of the Lord. The most relevant thing about this song is that it encourages spontaneity from those who are gathered to sing it. Recorded versions of this song include interjections and alternate lyrics such as "the dark tears of Babylon," "they need their God" and "sing it brothers, sing it sisters, a song of freedom." This song encourages spontaneity and playfulness even as it uses the plural pronoun we. "Rivers of Babylon" allows for diversity within community and eschews the individualism and me-focused lyrics that are a part of many contemporary pop songs. It is true that Mennonites generally take a structured approach to worship, but this should not be maintained simply because it is familiar. Rather, we should recognize that the spontaneity outlined above is fully in line with many of our longest-held beliefs. As time moves forward, perhaps these songs will enter our canon alongside the previous two examples.

Good art—good music—is not the exclusive domain of dead white men. It welcomes all, either in its interpretation or expression, and may be found in every culture.

If the purpose of church music is to be sentimental or cater to individual preferences, then a conversation about appropriate church music is in vain. The songs we sing are more than just vehicles to help us feel comfortable or nostalgic. They should provoke, surprise, strengthen and humble us. Good art is timeless and does not have cultural boundaries. We shouldn't feel guilty about singing the hymns that are part of our cultural tradition. However, we should feel guilty about reducing these hymns to mere sentimentality or closing our canon off from the artistic contributions of other committed Christians.

John Eicher is enrolled in a doctoral program in history at the University of Iowa. He is a member of First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind.

Uneasy inheritance: the Trail of Death

Sisters Marty Lehman (left), Goshen, Ind., and Marilyn Lehman, Austin, Texas, collaborated on this research last winter. Marty Lehman is director of churchwide operations for Mennonite Church USA. Marilyn Lehman is graduate program coordinator for the History Department at the University of Texas at Austin.

Our great-great-great-grandparents Joseph and Barbara (Yoder) Bontrager were among the first Amish to settle in Elkhart and LaGrange counties in northern Indiana, now a thriving Amish and Mennonite region. We Bontragers have always celebrated the hard work and pioneering spirit of these ancestors; a stone marker three miles from Marty's house commemorates the original homestead of Joseph (Sep) Bontrager.

According to the historical account, Sep and Barbara departed Somerset County, Pa., on June 3, 1841, and arrived in Indiana on June 29, having traveled more than 400 miles in covered wagons. There were 24 people in their caravan—eight adults, the rest children. Within weeks, the four families had purchased land. More Amish families followed, from Pennsylvania and Ohio, and the settlement grew rapidly.

Somehow we did not connect Native Americans' disappearance with the arrival of our ancestors.

Until recently, we have imagined this story of origin through the mythical lens of the American pioneer, applauding the endurance of our ancestors as they faced uncertain adventure and tremendous risk and turned wilderness into farmland through sheer dent of hard work.

We knew there were Native Americans in Indiana before our ancestors arrived; we grew up among towns with such names as Topeka, Wawaka, Mishawaka and Shipshewana. But somehow we did not connect their disappearance with the arrival of our ancestors. Our obligatory seventh-grade Indiana history began with the English and French settlers in the region and either ignored or elided the narrative of the Potawatomi, a native tribe who—since the War of 1812—had lived peaceably with their white neighbors.

The Potawatomi were coerced to sign a series of treaties to cede their land to the government. Known as the Whiskey Treaties—because whiskey was used to induce the Indians to sign—they included the Treaty of Yellow River, signed in August 1836, which promised $1 per acre of Indiana land and 320 acres of land in Kansas for each member of the tribe if they agreed to leave within two years.

By 1838, most of the Potawatomi nation had migrated peacefully to the West except Chief Menominee, who declined to leave. In response, the governor ordered the military to remove his tribe by force. After burning the crops and homes of the recalcitrant Indians, the military rounded them up and marched them off to Kansas.

The forced journey, known as the Trail of Death, lasted from Sept. 4 to Nov. 4, 1838. Of the 859 Potawatomi who began the 665-mile march, only 700 arrived in Kansas. (Not all the missing ones died; some managed to escape along the way.) The houses that were to have been built and waiting for them in Kansas were nonexistent, and winter was coming.

As the writers of Amish and Mennonites in Eastern Elkhart and LaGrange Counties, Ind., 1941–1991, noted, "Unlike the Israelites who found it necessary to defeat and destroy the inhabitants of their promised land, the Amish found no such obstacles in northern Indiana." While these ancestors—as followers of Menno Simons and Jakob Ammann—would undoubtedly have refused to take up arms to clear lands they wished to occupy, one wonders whether it occurred to them that a mere three years before their arrival the U.S. Army had done just that for them.

Our ancestors came to this country in search of religious freedom. One wonders how they allowed themselves to participate in displacing another people. Perhaps, like other European immigrants, they embraced the view of Native Americans as un-Christian and uncivilized "savages," thereby shutting off any connections they might have made to their own persecuted past?

We offer this as a cautionary tale. Our Anabaptist ancestors, by all accounts, were devout people committed to faithfulness to the church and to their separatist way of life. If this complicity with the government's agenda of empire building seems at odds with our postcolonial, postmodern sensibilities, we do well to remember it is aligned with the 19th-century American idea of Manifest Destiny. What remains for us is not so much to judge our ancestors as to question the ways we, like them, tend to focus on our own small communities and fail to notice the injustices around us we may be implicitly supporting.

Your table is ready

I had a dream in which I was responsible for setting up a grand party. I don't normally do this in my waking life—I am not particularly gifted at hosting, and I am something of an introvert. I don't go to many parties, much less throw them. As I expect I would in real life, in the dream I was anxious and agitated. In the midst of my anxious preparations, someone called over to me, "Your table is ready." And it was. A perfectly appointed, beautiful table, ready for guests. What a relief; I didn't have to do it alone.

I grew up in a church I've heard folks describe as inner city; actually it is on the edge of the city, right on the boundary of my city and a suburb. But I suppose people are correct when they describe the psyche and energy of that little area; it certainly has some of the problems, joys, hurts and issues of the inner city. However, that description always sounded jarring to me because I grew up there, and what I remember most about that area is the amount of green space and trees in the neighborhood. Across the street from the church was a big park. The neighborhood I lived in was just adjacent to the church; traveling by car or by bus would take 15-20 minutes to drive there. My neighborhood was six little streets bounded on three sides by woods and on the fourth by railroad tracks. There was one way in and one way out for vehicles. One could walk to the church in about the same amount of time it took to drive, but you got to go through delicious woods to get there, passing over a stream that had tadpoles in the springtime, then up a hill and over a well-worn path that had a section with great bumps for those riding bikes. The woods stretching out in other directions were just as fine—blackberry bushes, other streams and a meadow, trees so thick in some places that you could pretend you were in a deep, dark forest. In those days, children still spent long summer days traversing the neighborhood, going from house to house, playing indoors and outdoors, running about through the streets and in the woods, making sure to be home by the time the streetlights were on. So inner city doesn't quite compute in my ears, but I guess that's what other people saw.

This church of mine, founded in the late 1950s, was the bedrock foundation of my commitment to antiracism and the place where my peacemaking spirituality was nurtured. But such fancy terms were not used. It was simply church, but a different kind of church—one that from its roots was founded on the principles of integration, as opposed to the presumed segregation of most churches in the city and in the nation. This church was intentionally, from the beginning, a church "where black and white blend in Christ"—the slogan on the church sign and on the front of our weekly bulletins for most of my childhood.

My spiritual development happened in the context of a racially mixed group of people who were intentional about being church together during a period when actions were unusual, seemed impossible or at least foolish, and members of the church were told so. In my other contexts (school, for instance), the fact that I attended a church with a white pastor was just plain weird, and some questioned whether or not I really had "church" at my church. For those of us who grew up in the congregation, this place was home, and home became the standard by which we judged other worshipping communities. Indeed, for many of us it became the standard by which we judged white people. This may or may not have been fair, but I have always considered whether or not white Christians were willing to worship with black Christians and not have to change everything to the white way a measure of their authenticity. Willingness to learn is included in this.

Where black and white blend in Christ

It was not only that our church was willing to walk the unknown waters of interracial relationship on a person-to-person, family-to-family basis—members of the church community also addressed the dismantling of systemic racism. Here Anabaptist/Mennonite peace and justice theological concerns met the liberation and justice focus of black theology. Although many years have passed since my childhood, I continue to find co-travelers on this journey. I'm grateful for the many people and places that formed my comrades.

In this place, my home church, the table was set for me, and I was served the richest of fare. I ate well and grew strong. As I try to set the same kind of table for others, I'm delighted to discover over and over again that I'm not expected to do it alone.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary. The congregation she refers to is Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland.

Nurseries and pulpits

Meghan Florian attends Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

I grew up in a church with rigid gender hierarchies, so it wasn't until college that I attended a church where women regularly preached or held other leadership positions. My decision to pursue theological studies at Duke Divinity School was a step away from the Christianity of my youth, and as a member of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship (CHMF) it is a tremendous blessing to be part of a community where women's preaching gifts are affirmed. While I was in seminary, however, as I interacted with colleagues who support "women in ministry," I realized that many could be just as sexist as those who barred women from the pulpit.

It seems there is something missing from our understanding of the words "there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The question is no longer whether women can preach—of course they can. But we must also question our often unconscious sense of a hierarchy of ministries and the ways members' gifts are often reinterpreted in light of socially prescribed gender roles that have no biblical basis. It's true that women preaching challenges traditional hierarchies and the idea that only those who fit the normative construction of leadership should be heard. In order to more fully reflect the body of Christ we must not only allow but actively encourage women and others to speak the word of God to us.

We must be the kind of community where not only are women preaching but men are working in the nursery.

However, we also need to ask where women have been serving throughout the history of the church when they weren't allowed to speak. Women's inclusion in ministry often happens without pausing to reevaluate our overarching understanding of what that work is. Women have always been active in churches—preparing meals, teaching Sunday school, nursing babies. In our conversations around "women in ministry," then, we risk ignoring that women have always been doing ministry throughout the history of the church. Second, we don't take seriously the work that has been historically marked as "women's work." Finally, we cultivate an understanding of ministry in which women are expected to conform to "male" ways of embodying leadership without ever considering the flip side.

If we want to take seriously the call to be one in Christ as beings created in the imago dei (image of God)—for each member to explore her or his unique gifts, regardless of sex or gender—then we must be the kind of community where not only are women preaching but men are working in the nursery. One of the most radical moves the church can and must make is to reimagine who cares for our children. To do so acknowledges that having women in the pulpit (while vital) risks only being a symbolic challenge to gendered hierarchies rather than reshaping existing power structures. In *Body Politics*, John Howard Yoder writes, "To let a few women into an office that men have for generations wrongly restricted ... may be a good kind of 'affirmative action,' but it is hardly the most profound vision of renewal." We need to see women's bodies re-presenting Christ for us. However, this in and of itself does not demolish the hierarchies that structure the rest of our lives together.

Preaching need not be understood as more important than teaching Sunday school, cooking or caring for the children in our communities. As Yoder reminds us: "There is not (i.e. there should not be) one 'ministerial' role, of which then we could argue about whether it is gender specific. There are as many ministerial roles as there are members of the body of Christ, and that means that more than half of them belong to women." The point of affirming women as preachers ought never be to belittle the vital work women have been doing in the church all along. Instead, while we need to see women encouraged to raise their voices, to interpret and proclaim the word of God for us, we simultaneously need to encourage and challenge men to care for children as part of our worship. We ought to value and affirm all those women and men who feel called to this kind of ministry rather than (or in addition to) preaching.

As Yoder writes, "The transformation that Paul's vision calls for would not be to let a few more especially gifted women share with a few men the roles of domination; it would be to reorient the notion of ministry so that there would be no one ungifted, no one not called, no one not empowered and no one dominated." TM

The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of Mennonite Church USA, *The Mennonite* or the board for The Mennonite, Inc.

MC USA responds to Palestinian Christians' appeal

Congregations encouraged to read and discuss Kairos Palestine document

In December 2009, after years of prayer, struggle and anguish, Palestinian Christian leaders spoke with one voice to the global body of Christ in an 11-page appeal titled "Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth."

"Our word is a cry of hope, with love, prayer and faith in God," wrote the 15 Palestinian church leaders. "We address it first of all to ourselves and then to all the churches and Christians in the world, asking them to stand against injustice and apartheid, urging them to work for a just peace in our region, calling on them to revisit theologies that justify crimes perpetrated against our people and the dispossession of the land."

In October, Mennonite Church USA leaders responded to the Palestinian Christians' appeal, committing to expand opportunities for Mennonite leaders to visit Palestine and learn firsthand about the suffering there.

They also wrote a letter to members of Mennonite Church USA, asking them to read and discuss the Kairos document (see www.kairospalestine.ps and click on "responses" on the left), to study Scriptures together on the matter and to consider how their financial lives may be enmeshed in the occupation of Israel.

The response, sent by Mennonite Church USA executive director Ervin Stutzman in consultation with the Executive Board, acknowledges the ongoing reality of the suffering described in the Palestinians' letter and their persistence in clinging to hope and love.

In his letter to Mennonite Church USA members, Stutzman notes that across the church, people's perspectives and commitments related to Israel and Palestine vary greatly. For more than 65 years, Mennonites have lived, studied and ministered in Israel and Palestine, forming deep friendships and bonds of faith with brothers and sisters there. People representing a range of opinions about the conflict and Mennonite responses to it were consulted as the Kairos response was drafted.

In May 2007, a 10-person delegation representing various Mennonite agencies and organizations visited Palestine/Israel and engaged in dialogue with Christians, Jews and Muslims there. Upon returning, the delegation sent an open letter to Mennonite Church USA, urging the church to deepen its work for peace in the region. In response, an Israel/Palestine task force was formed, which called for Mennonite Church USA to respond to the Palestinian Christians' letter.

Stutzman encourages Mennonites to read the Kairos Palestine document and Mennonite Church USA's response and take steps such as:

- learning about the situation in Israel/Palestine, including visiting the region and meeting with Christian brothers and sisters there;
- re-examining what the Bible says about the land of Israel and engaging in conversation with each other about the theology of Christian Zionism and its impact on Christian brothers and sisters in the region;
- considering how their financial lives are enmeshed in the policies of occupation, especially through tax dollars and investments.

Mennonite Church USA response to the Kairos Palestine document is available online here: http://www.mennoniteusa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8QJdsFMIKRg%3d&tabid=55.—*Annette Brill Bergstresser of Mennonite Church USA*

simple giving

This Christmas, start a new holiday tradition. Give a teacher a gift of education, your favorite chef a gift of food or your grandparents a gift of health and friendship. Choose gifts in honor of family and friends that make a difference to them, to you and to the world.

mcc.org/christmas

Browse and purchase gifts online at mcc.org/christmas or request a printed booklet from your MCC office.

mcc.org/christmas

Canada 888-622-6337
U.S. 888-563-4676

Mennonite Central Committee

Haiti foundation offers business opportunities

Marie Sony reopens market stand through Mennonite Central Committee partner

Silas Crews/MCC

Former masonry student Samuel Zami, 27, stands outside a three-story building where he supervises masonry work in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Zami graduated from a masonry professional program at MCC partner Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice.

Before the magnitude-7 earthquake struck Haiti almost two years ago, Ronald Sadou Zami struggled to find work. Like many Haitians, he had discovered multiple ways to earn minimal income—he wrote poems for schools, was a sewing machine mechanic and sometimes did masonry work.

Now, after participating in a masonry seminar led by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), he has more consistent employment and earns more money for his family.

"I know things other masons don't know," says Zami, now 25. "There are things I knew before but was never able to put into practice."

James Mwangi, an associate professor of architectural engineering at California Polytechnic State University who worked with MCC during his sabbatical, taught the masonry seminar in June 2010.

About 40 students took the two-day class on how to build safe, disaster-resistant homes. The Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice, or FOPJ, an MCC partner for more than 13 years, hosted the seminar.

Zami, who also graduated from FOPJ's masonry trade school in December 2010, is working on building a cluster of multipurpose, expandable classrooms at a small university.

Zami's cousin, Samuel Zami (pictured above), 27, also participated in the masonry program and masonry seminar. He is now leading the construction of a three-story building, unusually high for this city.

FOPJ also leads professional trade programs in electrical construction, plumbing, cooking, tailoring and cosmetology.

FOPJ also teaches primary education to *restavec* children—unpaid workers living with families other than their own.

Marie Sony, who owns a market near her home, has one of these children, 11-year-old Berline Joseph. The girl works at home in the morning and attends FOPJ's primary school in the afternoon. There are about 300,000 unpaid child workers in Haiti. They typically cook, clean, fetch water and do other household chores.

"Because of the justice issues related to the trauma of unpaid child workers, MCC has been partnering with FOPJ on this project," says Susanne Brown, MCC Haiti disaster response team coordinator.

MCC also funded FOPJ's post-earthquake initiative to help women who sell goods along the road or in small markets.

Sony used to sell cosmetology goods in a market. During the earthquake, she lost everything. "I saw darkness," she says.

Sony now has a small roadside shop near her home in which she sells goods purchased with FOPJ's help. Though business is slow, she has faith in the customer-service strategies she learned from the FOPJ training.

"I talk to people in a nice way, even if they're not interested," she says.—*Sheldon C. Good for Meetinghouse, a consortium of editors from North American Anabaptist periodicals*

Silas Crews/MCC

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Marie Sony sits by her new market stand. Sony took part in a recapitalization program run by an MCC partner.

Haiti housing repairs, latrine projects build dignity

Mennonite Central Committee has funded 45 home repairs and five latrines.

In a matter of seconds, the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti turned Elumene Charles' modest, concrete home to rubble. She lost everything.

Until recently, Charles (at right) was one of more than a million Haitians who over the past two years have been living in transitional housing, often in tent camps.

Thanks to a housing repair project led by ACCESS, a Mennonite Central Committee partner, Charles and her six-member family have a new home. Charles praised the improvements to her modest house.

"I feel safer now," she says. "I thank MCC because they repaired my home, in which I lost everything."

ACCESS workers fixed her roof, reinforced the basement and added two upstairs rooms, which they're still finishing.

In total, MCC funds allowed seven masons and 30 handymen to repair 45 homes and build five latrines since early summer. The $180,000 project benefited about 250 people. Rubble remains scattered along the unpaved roads by Charles' home in the Boulard neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. Multiple nongovernmental organizations are working nearby. According to Patrick Pierre, ACCESS coordinator, the Charleses live in one of the hardest-hit areas of the capital city.

"We are almost finished with most of the repairs, and people are always asking if there will be another project so they can add their name to the list," he says.

ACCESS began in 2004 and is an organization of mostly young people who want to support the neighborhood. ACCESS members can participate in trainings on topics such as human rights, civic rights and environmental stewardship. They often work on cleaning up the neighborhood.

Silas Crews/MCC

Mariebelaine Sanon Buteau stands in front of a new latrine, the entryway covered by a curtain, built for her by MCC partner ACCESS with funding from MCC's earthquake response effort.

Silas Crews/MCC

Elumene Charles stands in her newly repaired home made possible by MCC partner ACCESS with funding from MCC's earthquake response effort.

MCC's partnership with ACCESS isn't limited to housing repairs. From February to April 2010, MCC distributed food for people in the area.

This year, two MCC Work and Learn teams cleared rubble in the Boulard neighborhood. Both teams came from Mennonite churches—one each in Canada and the United States.

From August to October, ACCESS built five latrines with MCC funding.

These bathroom-like structures are essential for "safe intimacy," Pierre says. "They need a space that is their own."

Mariebelaine Sanon Buteau and her family agree. They used a local church's latrine before ACCESS volunteers built them one.

Cholera is an issue near the family's cramped cluster of temporary homes that likely won't withstand weather and inhabitation for more than three months. The American Red Cross comes by regularly to distribute water purification aids.

Nonetheless, Buteau is thankful her family now has private bathroom facilities. "Now we have our own," Buteau says of her new latrine. "You can't live without it."—*Sheldon C. Good*

Haitians find trauma healing integral to restoration

Estivil trains six who each reach 350 people; that's 2,100 people in nine months.

Silas Crews/MCC

Holding group photos of many people trained in trauma healing, Michel Garly, left, executive director of Wozo, and Harry Thelusma, Wozo program officer, are excited that these people will teach other leaders and offer emotional help to those who suffered trauma from the earthquake. Wozo is a Mennonite Central Committee partner that teaches healing techniques for those suffering trauma.

With dignified humility, Edouarnus Estivil calls himself a direct victim of the January 2010 earthquake. It destroyed his Port-au-Prince home. It paralyzed his sister, and it killed his mother, the head of his household.

The earthquake, it seems, altered his life forever. A year later, his life was altered once again—by a trauma-healing training.

"After the earthquake, I didn't know how I was going to face life. I wasn't sure how I could go on," says Estivil, 30. "The trauma training allowed me to give another direction to my life and set some goals."

Wozo, the organization that runs the trauma-healing program, began in October 2010 with funds from six denominations and organizations, including Mennonite Central Committee and the Church of the Brethren.

The Haitian program is an adaptation of Eastern Mennonite University's Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience program, which began after the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States. The program also addresses the broader topics of conflict, justice and peace.

Wozo, which has secured funding until 2013, is the first trauma healing program spawned by EMU that has workers in-country.

And it's growing quickly, partly thanks to Estivil.

After conducting research in southeast Haiti with Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), he learned that while some people had received material support from multiple organizations, none of them received trauma healing.

So Estivil got to work. He wrote a proposal to CRWRC to replicate the Wozo program for those he works among.

Estivil then led six Haitians through the five-day training. In turn, these six people have each reached 350 people.

That's 2,100 people in less than nine months.

"People have responded very positively," says Estivil, who works for the Christian Reformed Church of Haiti, a CRWRC partner. "Participants often ask the trainers for their phone numbers so they can keep in contact."

The trainings, Estivil says, help people address all aspects of trauma: physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual.

"People sometimes think that a person is only [traumatized] physically, but there are issues inside that may not come out," he says. "This trauma program allows us to address all types of problems."

Wozo offers two trauma-healing trainings. The first is led by Haitians; the second, more advanced workshop, by EMU staff. Estivil took both in early 2011.—*Sheldon C. Good*

Bank on better values

If your bank worries more about its own bottom line than yours, come grow with a credit union that shares your values.

We give you everything you have been missing – personal service, community values and local expertise. Our bottom line? We help you make financial decisions with your faith in mind.

To transfer your account to Everence, go to Everence.com or call (800) 451-5719.

NCUA

Federally insured by NCUA.
Everence Federal Credit Union
is an equal housing lender.

Everence

Kenya goat project demonstrates group power

Mennonite Central Committee funds the restocking project in Kajiado.

Matthew Kistler

Toyia Sekento, 6, holds a goat that her family is raising. Her family received the goat because her father is part the Najile, Kenya, self-help group, supported by Mennonite Central Committee.

A goat project among Kenya's Maasai people is giving birth to more than baby goats. It's powering to life a cooperative group ethic that is helping 2,000 Maasai families cope with cultural change and ecological challenges.

The Maasai, traditionally pastoralists, have struggled for years to redefine themselves in light of reduced grazing land, pressure to abandon their nomadic way of life and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

The Kenya government has been encouraging the tribe to take up crop agriculture. In 2008, it granted farmland in the Osupuko highlands outside Nairobi to 200 Maasai families. Most knew little about farming. Worse, they moved onto the land during a three-year drought.

The Kajiado Goat Restocking Project, funded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), is helping them replenish their livestock, learn to farm and, especially, live in a community.

Living communally raises problems the Maasai didn't have to face when their lifestyle was nomadic. The goats, provided to project participants, are incentive to encourage working together for the benefit of their communities.

MCC partner organizations, Maasai Food Security and Development Program and Maasai Integrated Development Initiatives, began the goat project by training more than 60 groups in agriculture, livestock rearing and more.

Before group members could receive the goats, the partners required them to plan and implement their own activities, such as repairing community roads or caring for group farms. After the projects were complete, each member was eligible to receive up to five goats. The group helps pay for the goats, using a graduated fee system. By the end of the restocking project, group leaders will assume procurement responsibilities, independent of outside help.

One of the first groups, comprised of 120 families, to become eligible for goats was Osupuko Matonyok Organization (OMO), which began as a CFGB food-for-work group in 2009. Having already tilled one another's land and built community pit latrines, each member now has received two female goats, many of which have since produced kids. The Maasai value goats because they reproduce quickly, sell easily, handle drought better than do cattle and provide milk. OMO members have agreed they will not sell their goats right away.

"We hope that by next year each goat will have given birth twice, providing milk to consume and sell. We also want to paddock our fields so that the goats have grass to eat throughout the year. We want to see the goats we've received multiply," says OMO chairman John Mutua.
—*Matthew Kistler of Mennonite Central Committee*

Everence

Simple steps, profound impact

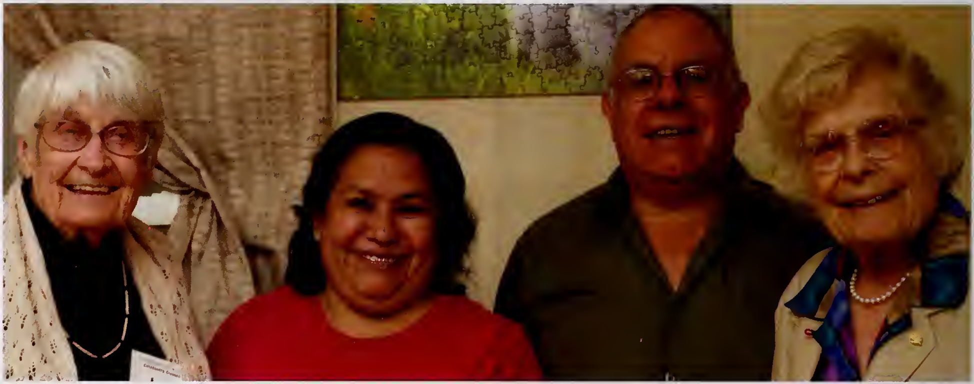
When it comes to charitable giving, a few simple steps can make a world of difference. And now, Mennonite Foundation (an affiliate of Everence) has made it even easier, with our new donor advised fund. To learn more, visit Everence.com or talk to an Everence representative.

2111136

Culture-clash leads to untiring service

Two sisters welcome Spanish-speaking newcomers in Goshen, Ind.

Craig Welscott



Lois Buckwalter, Zuleica and Rosendo Soto and Beulah Gonzalez enjoy fellowship in the Soto home.

While others their age may feel they have earned the right to a restful life, Lois Buckwalter, 90, and Beulah Gonzalez, 88, keep a schedule that would exhaust many younger people.

After a morning swim, these daughters of Mennonite missionaries make use of their roots in both North and South America to help neighbors caught between cultures. Now living in Goshen, Ind., with its large Hispanic population, they invest themselves in welcoming Spanish-speaking newcomers, partly because they remember their own pain.

They grew up in Argentina with Spanish as their heart language. Their parents, Ada and Nelson Litwiller, served with Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, for 42 years—first in Argentina and later in Uruguay.

Beulah shudders as she remembers the "worst year of my life." She was in fifth grade when her family returned to North America for 18 months. "I could hardly wait to get back to Argentina to forget that English," Beulah says.

One of the ways Lois and Beulah ease the stress of others caught between cultures is the tutoring they offer to Spanish-speaking families who are attempting to become U.S. citizens. Each Wednesday and Friday evening, they join as many as a dozen other volunteers who prepare immigrants for the naturalization process. The sisters have also become "abuelitas" (grandmothers) as they enter the joys and sorrows of the families with whom they work.

Beulah volunteers three hours a day at Chandler Elementary School, mostly in Jordan Bodnar's second-grade classroom, where 10 out of 24 children speak Spanish as their first language.

Lois and Beulah seem surprised that others may find their continued mission remarkable. They credit their parents' example and Mennonite colleges for their commitment to a life of service.

The motto of Goshen College, Lois and Beulah's alma mater, is "Culture for Service." Beulah says these three words have become ingrained in all she does.

Beulah began teaching as soon as she graduated from Goshen in 1944 and hasn't stopped since. In 1948, Mennonite Board of Missions asked Beulah to go to Puerto Rico to start Academia Menonita Betania in Aibonito.

Beulah met her husband, Ismael Gonzalez, in Puerto Rico. Beulah and Ismael were married in Goshen and had two children, who are both teachers.

Lois and her husband, Albert, were among the recipients of the first Culture for Service award that Goshen inaugurated in 1989. They were honored for developing a new way of doing mission among the Toba people of the Argentine Chaco and for serving there for 40 years.

The Buckwalters disbanded the mission-compound model that separated people from their culture when they expressed interest in becoming followers of Jesus. Lois and Albert lived among the Toba Christians as learners and laid the groundwork for a ministry of accompaniment that continues today. They also worked with a team of Toba linguists to create a written language and to translate the Bible.

Lois and Beulah, both having outlived their husbands, are now neighbors at the Goshen Greencroft retirement community.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mission Network*

The little churches that could stage *Godspell*

80 percent of church involved in the musical production that drew 825 people

Annette Brill Bergstresser

From left: John the Baptist (Kent Dutchersmith) baptizes John Lichty in Faith Mennonite Church's production of the musical *Godspell* while cast members Roberta Klemmer, Sadie Gustafson-Zook, Gwen Gustafson-Zook and Marilyn Torres wait their turn.

Two small churches in the United States and Canada staged the musical *Godspell* this year. The decisions to do so were unrelated. Superb Mennonite Church of Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, had three performances in February and March; Faith Mennonite Church of Goshen, Ind., had two in June.

The 1971 musical takes a communitarian, playful approach to the gospel story. A cast of 13—Jesus and his 12 disciples—acts out parables from Matthew and Luke.

"The musical fit very well with who we are as a congregation," says Kent Dutchersmith of Faith Mennonite, one of three directors and the creative impetus behind Faith's decision to stage *Godspell*. "It's cohesive, wacky and fun, and represents the 'upside-downness' of Jesus' message."

A church of around 100 people, Faith was founded in 1990 to reach out to people who had no church home, especially those on the margins of society.

Approximately 80 percent of the congregation got involved in the production, says Dutchersmith, who played John the Baptist and Judas in the musical. Faith folks of all ages served as actors and musicians, helped with behind-the-scenes work and prayed regularly for the endeavor. The congregation hired directors from outside the church, Phoebe Brubaker and Adrienne Nesbitt.

"The experience became much more than just doing a musical," Dutchersmith says.

Roberta Klemmer, a cast member new to Faith, says on the spiritual side of the production: "I'd never thought of Jesus as someone I could be friends with and joke around with," noting the bonds formed among the cast. "We were all very emotional before and during the crucifixion scene. *Godspell* affected me deeply. I hadn't expected that."

Faith's co-pastors, Kay Bontrager-Singer and Deron Brill Bergstresser, served as stage manager and Jesus, respectively. In an opening meditation prior to each rehearsal, Bontrager-Singer emphasized that *Godspell* is about "work, worship and play."

Brill Bergstresser reflected that *Godspell* "helped all of us take a fresh look at Jesus and at the kind of human community he invites us to create. The musical presents Jesus as someone who loved people yet challenged what they thought the Scriptures were telling them."

Faith's two performances of *Godspell* drew in about 825 people. Faith members heard many say later that they had come to support a small church's effort but left receiving an unexpectedly profound spiritual blessing.

Godspell was Faith's second musical; the congregation performed *Smoke on the Mountain* in 2002. Both musicals served as fund-raisers for a local farmers market program that makes produce available to people with lower incomes.

About 1,500 miles northwest, in western Saskatchewan, Superb Mennonite Church staged *Godspell* twice in Rosetown and once in Kerrobert. The rural congregation, a church of about 30, is named after its former townsite.

Like Faith, Superb also had a driving force: Grant Martens. He felt that with a little help from some friends, the congregation's dramatic wing—"Simply Superb"—could pull off *Godspell*. "Grant can be very persuasive," says Lois Siemens, Superb's pastor, with a chuckle.

Simply Superb had done three musicals: *The Wheatbelt Gospel*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *The Wheatbelt Parables* (written and composed by Martens, Superb's former pastor).

In *Godspell*, Martens played Jesus and performed in the band, as did four other actors. The Rosetown Community Theatre, which Martens founded, assisted with the production. As with Faith, Vicki Dyck, the director, doesn't attend Superb.

Siemens says highlights of *Godspell* included "seeing a fun, teasing, laughing side of Jesus" and singing "Day by Day." She says audiences were relatively small, but "they were moved, and some came three times to see us."

Siemens noted that not everyone in the church sings, so some helped with meals at rehearsals. "It was a bonding experience for the church members in particular," she says. *—Dan Shenk for Mennonite Church USA*

Church harvests help end 'food deserts'

Young adults driving force behind church, community gardens

Photo by bartelart.com

Eighth Street Mennonite Church food garden pickers are (standing) Delores Bartel, Ben Wiebe and Kristin Saner and (kneeling in front) Leonard Wiebe, Rachel Eisenhour and Joan Wiebe.

This year, Mennonite churches around the country offered the fruit (and vegetables) of their labor from their community gardens.

John VanderHeide, 26, describes his church's neighborhood as a "food desert." Rainbow Mennonite Church is located in the Rosedale neighborhood in Kansas City, Kan.

"There are no actual grocery stores, ... and the lack of public transportation means that most residents have to get food from convenience stores," says VanderHeide of Holland, Mich.

In response, Rainbow Mennonite provides produce from its gardens to Rosedale Farmer's Market, which operates out of Southwest Blvd. Family Health Care Center.

Rainbow Mennonite manages and co-manages three gardens: one across from the church parking lot, one near the church in partnership with the Rosedale Health Kids Initiative and one at the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) house in partnership with the Rosedale Development Association.

VanderHeide, an MVS worker, works with the MVS garden. Not only did that garden turn a vacant lot into something life giving and vibrant, it also allowed MVS workers to make connections. Through the garden and by sharing produce, VanderHeide learned more names of his neighbors in one week than in the previous nine months of living in the MVS house. "This is incredibly important ... because most of our congregants do not come from the neighborhood around the church, so finding ways to connect to our place is hard," he says.

Nicole Bauman, 26, also began community gardening as an MVS volunteer through her placement with the Elkhart (Ind.) Local Food Alliance.

In the spring of 2010, she began the Prairie Street Mennonite Church's Jubilee House Neighborhood Demonstration Garden. The garden extends all around the MVS house and garage—utilizing almost all the lawn space.

Bauman and others offer cooking and gardening classes to children and community members. They use recycled and reused gardening equipment, demonstrating how to garden with little space and resources.

When produce was ripe and ready, neighbors sometimes helped themselves—which Bauman says she was OK with.

"We encourage people to come and learn, but we are also OK with people taking [from the garden]," she says.

One Sunday morning at Lockport Mennonite Church near Stryker, Ohio, members munched on fresh salsa served with tortilla chips. The salsa was made from the tomatoes and peppers from the new garden at Lockport.

"[The salsa] was a big hit," says John Dinius, a Mennonite Youth Fellowship sponsor at Lockport last year.

However, the garden's intentions included more than snacks for church members on Sunday. After a group from Lockport read *Why Jesus Crossed the Road* by Bruce D. Main, members decided to use the abundant lawn space around the church to start a garden.

In addition to most of the salsa ingredients, the garden produced radishes, zucchini, squash, green beans and more.

Dinius encouraged members to pick the produce and share it with people at their work or their neighbors. Eventually, he hopes to donate produce to food banks and food pantries running low on fresh fruits and vegetables.

"Being a rural church with a strong agriculture background, Lockport could be a great resource to the community, with generations of knowledge available on growing and preparing fresh food," he says.

Lockport can look to Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., which shared some of 600 pounds of vegetables with the local food pantry, Harvest of Hope, this year.

After the demolition of rental houses on the lot a few years ago, the church considered the idea of a community garden. Ben Wiebe, a junior at Goshen High School, brought this idea up again last fall to benefit the Harvest of Hope Food Pantry, and the church formed a committee—now chaired by Ben and his grandfather Leonard Wiebe.

Due to the economic recession and the closure of several RV plants in the Goshen and Elkhart area, the need for dietary assistance has drastically increased. The Harvest of Hope Food Pantry offers food items to families in need. Eighth Street provides fresh tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers that are less commonly donated.—*Anna Groff with reporting by Rachel Giovarelli on Eighth Street Mennonite*

Churches choose columbariums over cemeteries

Niches save space by cremation, remind congregations of 'saints in heaven.'

Neta Kimel

Maribeth Troyer stands with the columbarium at Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix. She is the care minister.

In the '80s and early '90s, cremation was somewhat of a dirty word for many Mennonites. Despite increasing funeral costs, which now run well over $6,000, most individuals felt attached to a traditional burial in a cemetery, says Gene Kimel of Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix. Some individuals preferred burial in their hometown—far away from Arizona—driving up the funeral cost even more.

However, Peter Wiebe, Trinity's pastor from 1984 to 1996, offered a challenge to his congregation and suggested they purchase a columbarium. A columbarium is a repository of human cremated remains, often a wall—indoor or outdoor—with niches for urns.

Several years later, in 1996, a committee researched the option of a columbarium. Eighty-nine percent of Trinity members voted for it, and it was completed in 1997. At least nine other Mennonite churches have columbariums.

"During that time frame, the stigma of being cremated disappeared," says Kimel, a chiropractor who lives in Phoenix and caretaker of the columbarium. Also, the average cost of a cremation, around $1,000, is a fraction of the cost for a funeral.

Trinity was the first church in Glendale, Ariz., to adopt a columbarium. It is located behind one of the buildings.

"It's the equivalent of a church cemetery in a big city," Kimel says.

Kimel orders the nameplates for the niches and inurns (to place ashes in an urn) the cremains (ashes from cremation) from the funeral home, which arrive in a plastic bag, before placing the urn in the columbarium—unless a family member prefers to do this.

This flexibility is another advantage offered by cremation.

Bethel College Mennonite Church (BCMC) in North Newton, Kan., which dedicated its columbarium in 2005, also allows members to tailor the cremation process to their wishes. Sometimes the funeral home directors will pick up the urn—a simple aluminum cylinder—and return it with the ashes in it before the inurnment ceremony. At other times this happens during the ceremony.

Sometimes a family will choose to keep some ashes out of the urn and scatter them at a favorite place, such as a family farm. Some may still opt to embalm the body for a viewing before cremation.

BCMC sold reservations in its columbarium to fund the installation. They sold 29 niches within the first six months of the fund-raising. Thirty-one are filled. Members pay $500, and nonmembers pay $750.

Carol Buller saved both her parents' cremains for the completion of the columbarium. She knew it was a wish of her father not to take up space and use more resources than necessary for end-of-life matters. Buller, whose parents were Willard and Selma Unruh, served as chair of the installation committee.

BCMC decided to install the columbarium at the front of the church—despite some concerns it detracted from welcoming churchgoers and possible vandalism. But pastor Heidi Regier Kreider says the location is a blessing, as the columbarium offers a consistent reminder of the people who have died.

"We'll have children at Vacation Bible School running around the columbarium," she says. "It's a part of our life together."

Like Trinity and Bethel College churches, First Mennonite Church in Iowa City, Iowa, wanted to offer a place for remains, but its property offers limited space. After a process similar to that used by the other churches, First Mennonite installed a columbarium in May.

An increasing number of First Mennonite congregants chose cremation for ecological and stewardship reasons, says pastor Mag Richer Smith.

Members originally hoped for an outdoor columbarium, but the city code did not allow for that unless it was a fully enclosed courtyard as part of their building. Instead, they included an indoor columbarium in the fellowship space renovations. The wall is in the entry of their fellowship hall.

"It has turned out to be a lovely and sacred way to begin our community building in the new fellowship hall," Richer Smith says. "When we fellowship with the saints on earth, we pass this wall and become mindful that we are also celebrating with the saints in heaven."—*Anna Groff*

Fathers build furniture for new Elkhart building

Eleven men from all over the country make handmade bookcases and tables.

Edna Brugger

Lloyd Brugger with the two cherry bookcases he made in Lowville, N.Y., before he shipped them to Elkhart, Ind., for the new Mennonite Church USA offices.

When Lloyd Brugger's wife, Edna, brought the telephone to him in his shop on Oct. 26, his wood planer whirred in the background. Brugger, of Lowville, N.Y., was already on to his next furniture project for Bruggerwald Creations.

However, his last project was not for himself or a family member; it was two cherry bookcases for the new Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart, Ind.

Offering his handicraft to Mennonite Church USA, Brugger saw these bookcases from tree to finished product as he cut cherry trees from his woods, sawed them into lumber with a friend and dried them in a kiln. He spent about 30 hours on the bookcases over a few weeks.

Brugger, 69, is the father of Sharon Norton, personnel counselor and recruiter at Mennonite Mission Network. When Norton heard of Peter Graber's plans to involve volunteers to make some of the furniture for the building, she immediately thought of her father and brought it to his attention.

Before retiring three years ago, Brugger worked as the facilities director at Beaver Camp in Lowville. Prior to that, he taught high school in Nappanee, Ind., for 26 years.

Throughout his life, Brugger has worked in carpentry and construction. "I've had a hammer in my hand as long as I can remember," he says, although the furniture making began after his retirement.

"I am so glad that there's something I can do to help the work of the church even this little bit," he says. "I feel like I'm giving to the church I love."

Another volunteer, Peter Preheim of Marion, S.D., created two walnut side tables from local wood. He says the options provided were maple, walnut or cherry.

Preheim is the father of Rich Preheim and father-in-law to Leanne Farmwald. Rich is the director of the Mennonite Church USA Historial Committee, and Farmwald is the director of marketing and communication at Mennonite Mission Network.

The project took Preheim six weeks from start to finish.

"I'm strictly an amateur woodworker," he says, adding that he felt honored to participate and contribute his woodworking to the Mennonite Church USA buildings.

The side tables are complete and waiting at Farmwald's house for their move into the building. Preheim, who attends Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D., says he hopes to visit the building in the future and see his furniture.

Peter Graber leads the Elkhart office project management team. He says that while the building belongs to all members of Mennonite Church USA, "most people don't feel a strong connection."

"Those who have invested in the project in some way, especially volunteers, feel [a strong connection] in a tangible way," he said on Oct. 26.

Graber added that the team wanted the offices to have a "personal feel." The work of Mennonite woodworkers, along with original paintings and sculptures by Mennonite artists and other material gifts-in-kind, work to achieve this goal.

The tables and bookcases made by the 11 volunteers also reduce the bottom line by at least $8,000, he said.—*Anna Groff*

Furniture makers

Lloyd Brugger, Lowville, N.Y.

George Stoltzfus, Landisville, Pa.

Carl Rudy, Manheim, Pa.

Jim Miller, Swannanoa, N.C.

Herb Liechty, Goshen, Ind.

Dave Miller, Goshen

Melvin Voran, Goshen

Cal Graber, Goshen

Peter Preheim, Marion, S.D.

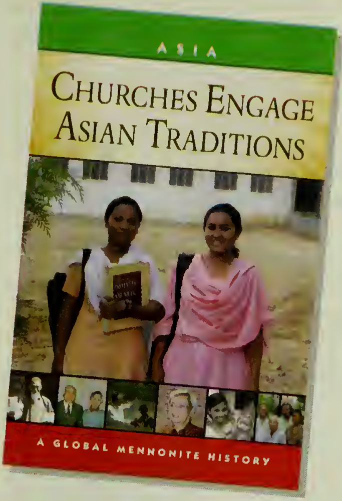
John Claassen, Whitewater, Kan.

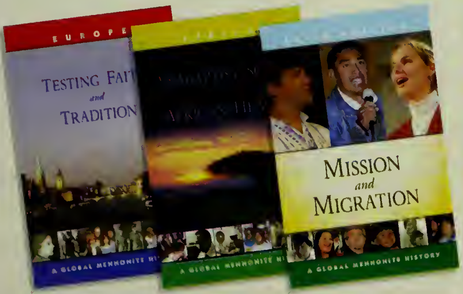
Phil Duncan, Phoenix

A History Never Before Told

Churches Engage Asian Traditions is the first comprehensive history to be written about the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Asia—from the first Mennonite church in Java in 1851, to 265,000 members in 13 Asian countries today.

Churches Engage Asian Traditions
ASIA • 384 pages • $11.95, paperback
Available now


ASIA
CHURCHES ENGAGE ASIAN TRADITIONS
A GLOBAL MENNONITE HISTORY


EUROPE
TESTING FAITH and TRADITION
A GLOBAL MENNONITE HISTORY
MISSION and MIGRATION
A GLOBAL MENNONITE HISTORY

- *Testing Faith and Tradition* examines the history of Mennonite churches in Europe and finds renewal and promise.
- *Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts* is written by African church leaders and pastors about the emergence of the church in Africa.
- *Mission and Migration* is the first comprehensive history of the church to be written by a Latin American Mennonite historian.

Testing Faith and Tradition • EUROPE • 324 pages • $11.95, paperback
Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts • AFRICA • 292 pages • $11.95, paperback
Mission and Migration • LATIN AMERICA • 362 pages • $11.95, paperback

The Global Mennonite History Series is a project of Mennonite World Conference. The five-volume history series tells the stories of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches around the world. The volumes, one for each continent, are written by persons from their respective continents, and reflect the experiences, perspectives and interpretations of the local churches.

NORTH AMERICA

Coming in 2012

Good Books

Available from your favorite bookstore or online retailer.
To order directly from the publisher, please call 800/762-7171, ext. 221.
www.GoodBooks.com

Goshen deals with Jim Miller's death

Rich Manalis, Douglas Swartzendruber will cover Miller's classes this semester.

Time and community will heal the wounds inflicted on the Goshen (Ind.) College community after Jim Miller's death on Oct. 9. But the sadness and new awareness of safety will not disappear quickly.

When Miller, a biology professor, was murdered in his home close to the college campus, not only did students and faculty lose a member of their community, they were also made aware of their own vulnerability.

Lizzy Diaz, a senior in one of Miller's classes this semester, says that she tries not to be scared for her safety but can't help worrying sometimes.

"I have had moments when I am at the computer lab really late, and then I have to walk back to my apartment by myself and I feel fear," says Diaz. "I keep telling myself, I will not let this scare me, [but] it is hard to imagine that this happened so close to campus."

Bob Yoder, the campus pastor, notes that the effects of Miller's murder extend beyond the campus and into the Goshen community. "I've noticed a lot more lights on in the street, and we're paying much more attention that our doors are locked," he says.

Char Hochstetler, the director of counseling, says that grief affects individuals differently, and it is important for the campus to provide times of grieving together and services for individuals who want further counseling.

"I think students connect with each other initially for support and it will be in time that they may feel the need to process more individually," says Hochstetler. "Even as life seems to go on, there will be times that students and colleagues will be reminded of him and feel the loss anew."

The strongest emotions felt by the Goshen College community are from those who knew Miller best. Miller was a professor at the college for 31 years and taught higher-level biology classes. He taught two classes and mentored 10 students in research this semester.

Ryan Sensenig, the biology department chair, says that faculty and students are aware of each other's grief and try to help one another along in the mourning process.

Within hours of hearing the news of Miller's death, biology faculty and students gathered in silent reflection. Now that the initial shock has worn off, the department has been conscious of giving each person the space to mourn when and how they need to.

"The differences between professors and students dissolved as we tried to navigate something that wasn't on the syllabus," says Sensenig.

When Miller's students gathered for class for the first time after his absence, Sensenig says they sat in silence and shared memories. A few weeks later, though, students told jokes with each other in honor of Miller's jokes—something that Miller integrated into every lesson.

At another point in a class, students were given photocopies of Miller's notes to study with.

"There were jokes in the margins, whiteout marks and hand-written additions to the notes," says Sensenig.

A key to the healing process has been to let each person decide how they want to mourn. For example, the students researching with Miller were given the option of having a new faculty mentor who would help them continue with their research or leaving it on hold until a later date.

"We're trying to be as transparent and open and honest with each other as possible," says Sensenig. "We're working with the students to give feedback."

To cover Miller's two classes this semester, the college has hired Rich Manalis, a close colleague of Miller's, and Douglas Swartzendruber, a biology alumnus of Goshen College from Colorado. Manalis will cover the vertebrate physiology research lab and Swartzendruber will teach the lectures for human pathophysiology and vertebrate physiology.—*Sara Alvarez for* The Mennonite

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR STEVE LANDIS (April 25-May 4)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR to EUROPE (May 25-June 7)
GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW and ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
LANDS of the BIBLE: JORDAN and ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR TYLER HARTFORD (July 19-28)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3)
TOUR of LITHUANIA (in partnership with Lithuania Christian College International University) (September 12-19)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND and UKRAINE (September 18-29)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA (October12-24)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR KEITH BLANK (November 7-16)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)
DANUBE CHRISTMAS MARKETS RIVER CRUISE (December 1-9)

2013 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 8-20)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE (February 26-March 8)
MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
GREAT TREK TOUR with JOHN SHARP (May 7-18)
ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (July 22-31)
THE BRITISH ISLES with DAVID and JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 13-25)
MEDA in MOROCCO (October 11-22)
BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (October 17-28)

TOURMAGINATION
DISCOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians and faiths around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451 FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR
E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada

Reg. #50014322

2308 Wood Street
Lancaster, PA 17603 USA

90-year-olds share CO stories

Menno-Hof in Shipshewana sponsors

On Oct. 30, 200 young and older Anabaptists came from across Elkhart and LaGrange counties in Indiana to hear stories of 89- and 90-year-old men who were conscientious objectors (COs) during World War II. The event was sponsored by Menno-Hof in Shipshewana and held at Siloam Fellowship in Goshen, Ind. The theme, "Anabaptists Serving God and Country: Then and Now," was brought to life by stories from four men who had served in Civilian Public Service camps as an alternative to serving in the U.S. military. Current service opportunities for men and women, young and old, were highlighted during the second half of the evening.

Sherm Kauffman, a retired Mennonite minister from Goshen, interviewed Monroe Barkman (Topeka, Ind.), Luke Birky (Goshen), Alvin Kauffman (Middlebury, Ind.), and Sherm Schrock (Topeka). Barkman was a young Amish man from Hicksville, Ohio, when he joined CPS; Birky entered CPS as a Mennonite from Albany, Ore.; Kauffman (1921) was from a conservative Mennonite congregation in Middlebury, and Schrock (1921) was from an Amish group in Topeka.—*Rachel Nafziger Hartzler from Menno-Hof*

At **Rockway** we believe **change** starts from the **inside** out. Lead that **change**.

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, a dynamic Christian school with a current enrollment of 300+ students (grades 7-12), invites applicants for the position of PRINCIPAL.

The successful candidate will:

- Be a passionate ambassador for a faith-based school that prepares students to be responsible, globally-minded, compassionate and reflective learners.
- Be grounded and articulate in the Anabaptist faith and able to engage students from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures.
- Be able to communicate the school's vision to students, parents, faculty, staff and the broader church community.
- Be a collaborative leader who empowers others.
- Have teaching experience and principal certification (*preferred*).

Interested applicants should visit www.rockway.ca for more information.

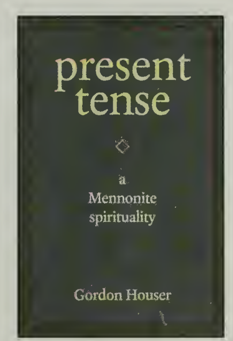
Duties will commence September 1, 2012.
Applications should be sent to: principalsearch@rockway.ca

Cascadia Publishing House LLC has released a record number of new titles in 2011, see examples below

MEDITATIONS on the BEATITUDES
Donald R. Clymer

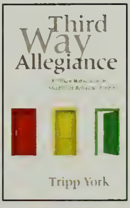
Meditations on the Beatitudes: Lessons from The Margins. Reporting on this book by Eastern Mennonite University professor Don Clymer, EMU quotes,"I took stories from my time in Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico and paired them with the Beatitudes," said Clymer. "The cultural context of the marginalized people in these stories is more like the time of Jesus, challenging our comfortable middle class views of what Jesus meant."84p $12.95

Present Tense: A Mennonite Spirituality
Gordon Houser explores the heart of Mennonite spirituality and how its spiritual practices may succeed or fall short.



" Houser's many years as an 'insider'—a church journalist—and 'outsider' —one who did not grow up Mennonite—render these reflections on Mennonite spirituality into a unique alloy of intimacy and objectivity." —*Valerie Weaver-Zercher*

"Houser has looked at the practices valued highly in his Mennonite community—patient following, peaceful reconciling, political integrity, playful relating, prayerful thinking, perfect imperfection and celebrating the present—and allowed them to be a mirror of his own life in the Spirit and as a member of 'the community of the Spirit.'" —*David Augsburger* 174p $16.95



Third Way Allegiance: Christian Witness in the Shadow of Religious Empire, Tripp York, which *Greg Boyd* believes "needs to be in the hands of every American serious about following Jesus." *J. Nelson Kraybill* warns, "Reader beware! May cause insomnia, bold new insight, heated debate, and exuberant bursts of radical discipleship." 124p $12.95

Cascadia
www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com
contact@cascadiapublishinghouse.com
all available Amazon.com, BN.com, and more

Church embarks on 'Alpha to Omega' journey

Kidron Mennonite members read through the entire Bible in 2011 for A2O.

At the end of 2010, Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church members decided to read the entire Bible together throughout 2011. As of Nov. 8, they were through the Gospels and starting the book of Acts.

The reading plan, called A2O for Alpha to Omega, was developed by the pastoral leadership team at Kidron Mennonite: Larry Augsburger, transitional pastor, and Thomas Dunn and Lydell Steiner, team pastors. At the end of 2010, the pastors offered a copy of the New Living Translation Bible for anyone who wanted one, along with a bookplate and a bookmark with 365 boxes to check off—one for each day of reading.

The rules for A2O include these: "Read daily from your Bible. Underline anything that strikes you personally. If you fall behind, skip what you missed and read the current reading. Feel free to catch up, but stay current."

Kidron members started out strong, but as they read about the repeated failure of God's chosen people to remain faithful, it was easy to get discouraged and fall behind. A new rule was born: "Don't stop reading. Skip the days that you fell behind and begin again. This isn't a competition to see how many of us can read it all."

"I created my own catch-up routine, involving reading one missed day after reading the current day's selection. It sometimes took me a few days to catch up, but at least I wasn't always behind," says Kris Nussbaum, church minister of Christian education.

How many are still reading after 10 months?

"It's hard to tell, but I don't know a single person who has given up. I know several people who have not spent a whole lot of time with their Bibles in the past who are not only still reading but are ahead of schedule," says Nussbaum.

Perhaps the accessible translation they use helps, Nussbaum says. The daily readings average 15 minutes. "Our staff and elders are in conversation about how to extend this communal experience into 2012 with new ways of interacting—together—with the Word," says Nussbaum.—*Anna Groff with reports from Kidron Mennonite*

Lorie Troyer/Lifescapes

Children at Kidron Mennonite participate in A2O Moments focusing on the week's Bible readings.

Mennonite
Central
Committee

Mennonite Central Committee welcomes inquiries for the following urgent service opportunity:

MCC Representative for Bangladesh

Interested individuals are asked to contact Amgad Tadros at 204-261-6381 or amgadtadros@mennonitecc.ca

For more information on this and other urgent positions in Asia, please visit mcc.org/serve.

Recipe for disaster:

1 car
1 cell phone
1 distracted driver

85 YEARS

Goodville Mutual

New Holland, Pa.
goodville.com
800-448-4622

Those of us who bring you TheMennonite wish you God's richest blessings during this season of hope and light.

Front, left to right: Gordon Houser, associate editor; Everett Thomas, editor; Anna Marie Groff, associate editor. Back: Rebecca Helmuth, circulation and advertising coordinator; Dee Birkey, designer; Celina Romero, bookkeeper. Not pictured: Nora Miller, proofreader.

WORKERS

Gallardo, Joanne K., was licensed for special ministries by Virginia Mennonite Conference as associate campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., on Sept. 9.

Hunsberger, Willis G., was ordained as pastor at Concord Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Tenn., on Sept. 11.

Kanagy, Conrad, was installed as pastor at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., on Oct. 1.

Nolt, Robert, was installed as intentional interim pastor at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa., on Nov. 1.

Siegrist, Donna, was licensed as associate pastor for women's ministry at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, Mount Joy, Pa., on Oct. 9.

Weick, James, was licensed as lead pastor at Bethlehem Community Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., on Oct. 23.

Wenrich, Jonathan, was licensed as deacon at Blainsport Mennonite Church, Reinholds, Pa., on Oct. 16.

OBITUARIES

Beachy, Elsie Marie Leaman, 91, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Alvie Roy Beachy (deceased). Parents: M. Martin Rohrer Leaman and Elizabeth Leaman. Children: Glenn, Dottie Hathaway, Don, Lois Eby; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Bender, Delmar, 92, Parnell, Iowa, died Oct. 3. Spouse: Goldie J. Miller Bender (deceased). Parents: Irving and Ethel Yoder Bender. Children: John, Alice Golden, Virginia Rew, Les, Laurie Bender; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at West Union Mennonite Church, Iowa County, Iowa.

Blosser, Wilma Lehman, 101, Columbiana, Ohio, died Oct. 19. Spouse: Harvey Blosser (deceased). Parents: Edwin and Mary Basinger Lehman. Step-children: Rosetta Martin, Virgil Blosser. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Buhr, Eva Rempel, 86, Altona, Manitoba, died Oct. 16. Spouse: Edward Buhr. Parents: Jacob J. and Marie Gerbrandt Rempel. Children: Sharon Boivin, Robert, Bonita Grande, Patricia, Charles, Rodney, Julie, Laurie Loewen, James, Raymond, Stuart, Nicole Schultz; 20 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Clemens, Phyllis G. Walker, 94, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 27. Spouse: Marcus Clemens (deceased). Children: Donald, Orrie, Leanne Wentorf, Jane Landes, Carolyn Bontrager; 14 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Souderton.

Cunningham, Miriam F. Morse, 100, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 6. Spouse: John W. Cunningham (deceased). Parents: Winthrop B. and Lucy Johnson Morse. Child: David; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 9 at The Meetinghouse, Greencroft Retirement Communities, Goshen.

Derstine, Jean Marie Langenwalter, 78, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 24. Parents: Edwin and Marie Dester Langenwalter. Children: Alonna Smith, Rebecca Esch, Deborah Zug, Timothy, Regina Overton, Sarah Epp, Ben; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Freyenberger, Joseph Dean, 81, Wayland, Iowa, died Oct. 18 of lymphoma. Spouse: Janice Carolyn Ruth Freyenberger (deceased). Parents: Christian J. and Leah Mast Freyenberger. Children: Barbara Freyenberger, Michelle Frederick, Carmen Martinez, Maria Roth; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Hofer, Margaret L., 96, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 9. Spouse: George M. Hofer (deceased). Parents: Jacob L. Hofer, Sr., and Elizabeth Kleinsasser Hofer. Children: Yvonne Schnarr, George Hofer, Jr., Rodney; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Horst, Elam Bauman, 93, Kitchener, Ontario, died Nov. 3. Spouse: Myrtle Feick Horst. Parents: Menno and Lovina Bauman Horst. Children: Gloria King, Dale, Mary Lou Snyder, Myrna Schlegel, Steven; 14 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 7 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ontario.

Irwin, Laura "Eleanor" Johnson, 93, Germantown Hills, Ill., died Oct. 15. Spouse: John W. Irwin (deceased). Parents: John and Laura Gaull Johnson. Children: William D., John, Robert, Dennis, Janice; 11 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Cazenovia Mennonite Church, Cazenovia, Ill.

For the Record is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. Births and marriages appear online at www.themennonite.org. Obituaries are also published in *The Mennonite*. Contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 for expanded memorial and photo insertion options. To submit information, log on to www.themennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access online forms. You may also submit information by e-mail, fax or mail: Editor@TheMennonite.org; fax 574-535-6050; 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Jantzi, Emery K., 90, Liverpool, N.Y. and Lowville, N.Y., died Nov. 8. Spouse: Doris Church Jantzi. Parents: Christian and Anna Kennel Jantzi. Children: Patricia Jantzi. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Adirondack Funeral Home, Croghan, N.Y.

Janzen, Dorothy, 84, Goessel, Kan., died Oct. 29. Parents: Peter F. and Susie Janzen Janzen. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Bethesda Home Chapel, Goessel.

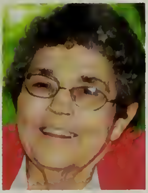
Kaufman, Clyde Sidney, 83, Marion, S.D., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Fern Kleinsasser Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Leon and Lena Waltner Kaufman. Children: Sharla Unruh, JoLeen Cunningham, Allison Russell, Robin Anderson; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

King, Maurice, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Martha E. Lugbill King (deceased). Parents: William and Carrie Nozinger King. Children: Bill, Linda King, Bonita Beck, Karen Koellein; 13 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Fairlawn Haven, Archbold.

Kiser, Ruth Voth, 75, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 31. Spouse: Merle Kiser. Parents: John and Linda Graber Voth. Children: Randy, Cindy Garletts; two grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Klassen, John L., 86, Altona, Manitoba, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Helen Klassen. Parents: John H. and Helena Loeppky Klassen. Children: Richard, Ruth Friesen, Alvina Hildebrand; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Lehman, Phyllis Jutzi, 84, Croghan, N.Y., died Oct. 22. Spouse: William Lehman (deceased). Parents: John and Susan Kennel Jutzi. Children: Brian, Brent; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.



Miller, Helen Marie Hostetler, 81, Cleveland, Ohio, died peacefully at home Oct. 20. She was born on Feb. 13, 1930, to Amra and Ruth Balmer Hostetler. She began her life on a farm in Harper, Kan., as the second of six children. She graduated from Hesston College and received her Bachelor's degree from Goshen College in 1951. Helen and Vern Miller were married on Oct. 28, 1951. They felt called to the city, so they moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where they worked with the Mennonite Missions Board to build two churches rooted in the community, first Gladstone Mennonite Church then Lee Heights Community Church. Helen was well known for playing the organ at Lee Heights almost every Sunday, and she was a vibrant contributor to the Lee Heights congregation throughout her life. In 1983, she was ordained as a minister and served as a pastor alongside her husband. Helen managed the Ministerial Alliance Retirement Center for 18 years. She served on the MARC Board almost until the time of her death. In all her roles, she was a friend and mentor to many, and even after retirement, people looked to her as a constant source of guidance, advice and comfort. Survivors include: Robin (Cynthia), Rosina Berkey (Craig), Rochele Beachy (Nathan) all of Cleveland Ohio, Renita Strange (David) of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Ryan (Lisa) of Morganton, N.C., her 5 siblings, 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She was a loving role model who laughed and fussed and worried and prayed her family into adulthood. Helen was a vibrant woman who lived with radical compassion, love and practicality. With an easy, resounding laugh and a straightforward honesty, she was a joyful presence in the lives of many. Memorial Services were held at Lee Heights Community Church. Burial was in Aurora Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Explore Academics @Bluffton

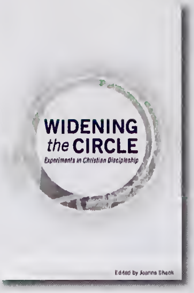
Friday, Dec. 2, 2011

- Business
- Education
- Health, fitness and exercise science
- Information technology
- Sports and recreation management

Learn about all of Bluffton's programs @ www.bluffton.edu

BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY

Register one week prior to event at:
1.800.488.3257, Option 1
www.bluffton.edu/admission/visit/explore/



New from Herald Press

Widening the Circle
Experiments in Christian Discipleship
Joanna Shenk, editor

A growing number of people are smitten with an Anabaptist vision of church and mission. Often coming from outside the Mennonite mainstream, they've formed communities and sought to live out their radical faith. In the process, they often bump up against the institutional church. The stories in this book explore that creative tension. The result is a rich showcase of Jesus-centered discipleship.

$14.99 USD/$17.25 CAD
www.MennoMedia.org/WideningtheCircle

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)

Herald Press is the book imprint of MennoMedia.

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

Miller, James S., 58, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 9. Spouse: Linda Suderman Miller. Parents: Oscar Miller and Elizabeth Bixel Jeschke. Children: Lisa Rose Martin, Leanne Miller, Robert; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Katherine "Kathy" Annette, 54, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Oct. 23. Parents: Wayne E. and Betty Miller. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Miller, Lloyd P., 77, Sarasota, Fla., and Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Lois E. Barkey Miller. Parents: Peter and Elizabeth Miller. Children: Joleen Myers, Starla Borror; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Moser, Marvin M., 81, New Bremen, N.Y., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Belva Zehr Moser. Parents: Jacob and Nina Lehman Moser. Children: Lynn, Lawson; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 21 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen.

Morrow, John W., 81, Sellersville, Pa., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Margaret Fretz Morrow. Children: John, Jeffrey; two grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Mullet, Mary Yoder, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Roman B. Mullet (deceased). Parents: Henry and Ruby Miller Yoder. Children: Freida Welty, Ruby Farmwald, Betty Hochstetler, Carolyn Mullet, Alvin; 13 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 21 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Musser, Jacob H., 95, New Holland, Pa., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Etta H. Weaver Musser (deceased). Parents: Shelly and Alice Hertzler Musser. Children: Dorthy Weaver, Ruth Mae Lapp, Roy, Janice Wyble, James, Jacob, Jr.; 16 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Garden Spot Village, New Holland.

Neufeld, John R., 85, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Amanda Kroeker Neufeld. Parents: Henry and Justina Neufeld. Children: Carolyn Buhler, Leland, Betty Hamm, Faye Grounds; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Ranck, Donald E., 84, Gordonville, Pa., died Nov. 1. Spouse: Kathleen Martin Ranck. Parents: Edwin G. and M. Helen Hershey Ranck. Children: Beth L. Yoder, Louise Ranck; two grandchildren. Nov. 5 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Rich, Gwendolyn Almeda Brenneman, 66, Archbold, Ohio, Oct. 24, of cancer. Spouse: Phillip J. Brenneman. Parents: Dr. J. James and Maude Brenneman. Children: Sarah Berry, Jonathan Witmer-Rich, Rebecca Rich; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Ruth, Walton C., 81, Telford, Pa., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Ruth B. Bower Ruth. Parents: Paul L. and Naomi L. Clemens Ruth. Children: Marlin, Elaine Grote, Ronald; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 16 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Schrock, Alta M. Roth, 98, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 29. Spouse: Elmer Schrock (deceased). Parents: Frank and Ada Schmucker Roth. Children: David, Grace Stutzman, Barbara Gingerich, Robert, Joyce Guinness, Sara Knackstedt; 13 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Selzer, Alice B., 87, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 23. Parents: Edward and Lorena Neuschwanger Selzer. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Shoemaker, Thelma Louise Rembold, 88, Springs, Pa., died Oct. 4 of Alzheimer's Disease. Spouse: Carl David Shoemaker (deceased). Parents: Homer and Nettie Livengood Rembold. Children: David Eugene, Craig, Sharon Urban; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Supplee, Elizabeth "Lizzie" L. Moyer, 95, Sellersville, Pa., died Oct. 11 of coronary artery disease. Spouse: Patrick L. Supplee (deceased). Parents: Vincent and Mary Ellen Landis Moyer. Children: Betty Wismer; two grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Williams-Bergey-Koffel Funeral Home, Telford, Pa.

Tressler, Elwood "Piney" Ray, 86, Springs, Pa., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Audrey Elaine Engle Tressler (deceased). Parents: John and Annie Eichorn Tressler. Children: Rhonda Hershberger, Clyde; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Troyer, Andy E., 86, Hartville, Ohio, died Oct. 11. Spouse: Sylvania Slabaugh Troyer. Parents: Eli and Mary Farmwald Troyer. Children: Clara Sommers, Raymond, Viola Wittmer, Andrew, Marcus, Donnie; 17 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Ulrich, Elton E., 90, Eureka, Ill., died July 13. Spouse: Fern Ida Grieser Massanari-Ulrich. Spouse: Miriam Bachman Ulrich (deceased). Parents: Andrew J. and Ella Elma Unzicker Ulrich. Children: Cheryl Ryniak, Joyce Klokkenga, Diane Geiser, Douglas Ulrich; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Step-children: David Massanari, Annette Sommer, Elizabeth Ingold, Dennis Massanari; 10 step-grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, Ill.

Umble, Lena Irene Mast, 91, Atglen, Pa., died Sept. 5. Spouse: Harold M. Umble. Parents: David C. and Mamie Stoltzfus Mast. Children: Loretta Sharp, Kenneth, Joanne Weaver, Dennis, Twila Charles, Galen; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Wess, Miriam L. Maurer, 86, Canton, Ohio, died Oct. 10. Spouse: Harold Wess (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Mary Krabill Maurer. Children: LuAnn Sassaman, Larry, Lynn, Lon; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Widmer, Dr. James Glen, 93, Wayland, Iowa, died Aug. 10 of cancer. Spouse: Helen Yoder Widmer. Parents: Christian and Elisabeth Rediger Widmer. Children: Gwen Widmer Clancy, Theodore, Jane Widmer Yoder, Jean Clark, James, Janice Hadley; 13 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Yoder, Merlin Jay, 60, Bay Port, Mich., died Oct. 24 from injuries sustained in a farm accident. Spouse: Patricia Shetler Yoder. Parents: Luke D. and Cora Maust Yoder. Children: Shari Craig, Michael; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon, Mich.

New from MennoMedia

Waging Peace
Muslim and Christian Alternatives

Waging Peace
Muslim and Christian Alternatives
A documentary about overcoming mistrust, hatred, and violence

Airing this fall on ABC-TV stations, the documentary is now available for purchase on DVD. See interviews about the peacemaking traditions of Muslims and Christians and watch stories of how these faith groups work for peace, including Mennonites and Muslims in Ontario making quilts for refugees.

$24.95 USD / $27.95 CAD
www.WagingPeaceAlternatives.com

Also available from MennoMedia
Book Series on Christians Meeting Muslims
- Teatime in Mogadishu
- Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church
- A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue

Each $14.99 USD / $17.25 CAD

800-245-7894 (USA)
800-631-6535 (Canada)
www.MennoMedia.org/store

MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

Available digitally

TM DIGITAL EDITION

The Mennonite is now available in a **digital edition** you can read on your computer screen or tablet.

To sign up, e-mail **editor@themennonite.org** or call **800-790-2498.**

A FORUM FOR THE VOICES OF MENNONITE CHURCH USA
TheMennonite
The journey of
John Powell
mission advocate
for Mennonite
Mission Network

RESOURCES

John by Jo-Ann A. Bryant (BakerAcademic, 2011, $29.99) is a commentary on the Gospel of John in the Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament series. Bryant, professor of Bible, religion and philosophy at Goshen (Ind.) College, focuses on John's dramatic rhetoric. The book is informed by Greco-Roman rhetoric and sources, archaeology, maps as well as current literary approaches.

Hip-Hop Redemption: Finding God in the Rhythm and the Rhyme by Ralph Basui Watkins (BakerAcademic, 2011, $17.99) explores hip-hop culture and argues that there is something inherently redemptive within that culture.

War and the American Difference: Theological Reflections on Violence and National Identity by Stanley Hauerwas (BakerAcademic, 2011, $19.99) helps readers reflect theologically on war, church, justice and nonviolence and explores such issues as how America depends on war for its identity, how war affects the soul of a nation, the sacrifices that war entails and why war is considered "necessary," especially in America.

Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament by Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (BakerAcademic, 2011, $22.99) mines classic New Testament texts such as the Sermon on the Mount, the cleansing of the temple, the "armor of God" and the Revelation of John and addresses the rhetoric of violence that may reflect the violence of first-century Roman imperial reality. See review on page 59.

The Insulted and the Injured: A New Translation by Fyodor Dostoevsky (Eerdmans, 2011, $24) is a new translation by Boris Jakim of Dostoevsky's first major work of fiction, after his Siberian exile and the first of the long novels that made him famous.

Mennonite in Blue Jeans by Rhonda Langley (2011, $12) is a humorous autobiographical account triggered by reading *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress* by Rhoda Janzen, whom Langley grew up with in Fresno, Calif. The books represent two views of the same Mennonite community. It's available from amazon.com.

Winterberries and Apple Blossoms: Reflections and Flavors of a Mennonite Year by Nan Forler, paintings by Peter Etril Snyder (Tundra Books, 2011, $24.99), includes poems and recipes, complemented by paintings, that reflect the seasonal rhythms of the author's rural Mennonite community.

A Different Kind of Cell: The Story of a Murderer Who Became a Monk by W. Paul Jones (Eerdmans, 2011, $14) is the story of Clayton Anthony Fountain, convicted of five violent murders, who underwent a profound spiritual transformation.

Answers to the page 61 puzzle

S	O	E	E	M	N	■	D	E	S	C	E	N	D
T	■	T	■	E	■	■	E	■	T	■	X	■	E
N	T	G	H	T	A	E	E	■	N	■	U	■	T
G	■	H	■	■	B	■	T	■	N	■	E	E	T
T	N	T	H	E	H	T	G	H	E	S	T	■	Y
N	■	■	A	■	O	■	H	■	R	■	A	■	■
G	O	E	D	■	R	■	T	■	S	A	T	A	N
■	C	■	S	■	R	■	■	W	■	■	T	■	O
E	O	R	E	V	E	R	■	A	■	C	O	M	E
■	M	■	T	■	D	A	R	K	■	A	N	■	E
W	E	■	Z	■	■	N	■	E	A	R	■	S	■
■	■	B	E	E	E	S	■	S	W	E	E	T	■
■	G	O	D	■	■	O	■	■	A	■	■	A	■
J	O	Y	■	O	N	M	A	R	Y	S	■	Y	E

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for **AREA CHURCH MINISTER** (Formerly Conference Minister). The Area Church Minister will be a leader of leaders, who oversees the credentialing, formation, and resourcing of pastors for effective missional leadership in MCEC congregations. The applicant for this full-time position will be an excellent communicator and team builder. He/she will work with the senior staff team to realize MCEC's mission of extending the peace of Jesus Christ. Applicants will have previous pastoral experience, a commitment to Anabaptist theology, a familiarity with Mennonite denominational polity, and will demonstrate spiritual and emotional maturity. Ordination and a seminary degree are required. Preferred start date is Sept. 2012. Resumé and current MLI are due by Dec. 31, 2011. For more information, a job description, or to submit an application contact:

David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister
Phone: 519-650-3806 /1-800-206-9356 Ext. 113
E-mail: dmartin@mcec.ca
www.mcec.ca

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada **Église Mennonite de l'Est du Canada**

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.30 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or e-mail advertising@themennonite.org.

"***Life, Love, Llamas and Laughs: My Story.***" 459 pages. 54 illustrations. Autobiography. From Lancaster County, Pa., to Mayo Clinic. Service in Southern Highlands and Congo, Mennonite Medical Association, Rochester Mennonite Church and Heifer Project International. Llama breeder since 1981. $17.95 plus $4 postage. Order from **Art Kennel**, 211 2nd St. NW #1908, Rochester, MN 55901.

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference seeking ***full-time executive conference minister***. Qualifications: Experience in pastoral and/or denominational leadership, commitment to the church, administrative and leadership gifts/experience, ability to maintain effective, collaborative relationships, bilingual proficiency preferred. Contact nancyk@mennoniteusa.org.

Camp Friedenswald is seeking an individual, couple or family to fill a voluntary service position as ***guest host***. Position requires an outgoing and hospitable personality and good communication skills. Must be available two weekends a month plus an additional week during each of the summer months. Housing and some meals provided. Call 269-476-9744 or e-mail info@friedenswald.org for more information.

Part-time youth pastor position available at **Rockhill Mennonite Church**, Franconia Conference, Telford, Pa. Contact rockImmediate opening: Pennsylvania university town church seeks campus ministry developer/coordinator (six-month position with possibility of extension) to explore and formulate options re formation of an intentional, possibly residential, community. More information at www.universitymennonite.org.

Immediate opening: Pennsylvania **university town church** seeks ***campus ministry developer/coordinator*** (six-month position with possibility of extension) to explore and formulate options regarding formation of an intentional, possibly residential, community. More information at www.universitymennonite.org.

Johann, the first novel published by **Everett J. Thomas**, is available at Amazon.com. Type ISBN number 1463665091 in the search window of the Books section. Copies may also be ordered from Better World Books, Goshen, Ind., at 574-534-1984.

Jossimar's journey of faith

Sharon Kniss attends Our Community Place, in Harrisonburg, Va.

Jossimar Diaz-Castro was 16 when he first went to church. Growing up in Mexico City, he and his family held a nominal Catholic faith, most often experienced through Quinceañeras (coming-of-age ceremony for girls). As a child, neither Jossimar nor his family had much interest in faith, which led to little exploration of the cultural Catholic tradition. The family moved to Atlanta, and out of a time of spiritual searching, Jossimar's mother found herself at a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in the city. Even though Jossimar thought the church was a bit crazy, he noticed a marked difference in his mother, who was living a life of greater joy and greater love. He noticed that Christianity was different. When the family moved to Harrisonburg, Va., Jossimar was at a low point in his life, said, Why not? and visited church with his mother.

I was impressed with the depth of his conviction of faith.

Though not impressed initially with the physicality of the Pentecostal church's worship, Jossimar was drawn in by the sermons, and before long, his life was on a new trajectory. Jossimar embraced the teachings of love, joy and new life as he was welcomed into a community of people who cared for him. In time, he grew to cherish and practice a more Pentecostal style of worship.

Jossimar Diaz-Castro, now 20, is a junior at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

In his new commitment to "following our Lord," Jossimar wanted to study more about Christianity and its teachings, about God and the path he now walked. He enrolled at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg.

Through studying at EMU, the sociopolitical dimensions of the Gospels became clearer to Jossimar. He began attending Early Church, a Mennonite congregation with a clear embrace of people who are "poor." This embrace felt reminiscent of liberation theologians he respected, such as Oscar Romero, who spoke of the gospel's preferential leaning to the poor and suffering.

In time, Jossimar's connection with the Pentecostal tradition pulled him toward another worshipping community in Harrisonburg, Iglesia Discipular Anabautista. This church naturally was a bridge between Latino Protestant-Evangelical-Pentecostal styles of worship and life and Mennonite commitments of peace, ethics and sociopolitical considerations. For the last several months, Jossimar has worshipped with this congregation, feeling stronger that his unique call may be to be such a bridge.

In addition to heeding this call to ministry as a bridge person, Jossimar intends to write. Through his studies in theology and philosophy at EMU, Jossimar has had the chance to write and is interested in doing more on the topics of immigration from a Christian perspective (he appreciates a sensitivity he noticed Mennonites have that "Christ's laws of hospitality can be above the state's laws of exclusion") and about Pentecostalism and Mennonites.

I knew Jossimar only minimally as we briefly overlapped when he worshipped with Early Church. I knew, though, that he was a young man with a passionate heart and abundant joy. In all my interactions with him, he greeted me with a broad smile, which shifted often into animated excitement as he spoke of things he is passionate about. I assumed, without evidence, that Jossimar had been a part of the Mennonite community for a long time. When speaking with him for this column, I was impressed with the depth of his conviction of faith when I realized he was relatively new to following Christ and to Mennonite understandings. I was honored and inspired as I spoke with him and listened to his honest and humble accounting of his faith journey.

I've used this column to highlight different young adults I've come across who inspire me on their adventurous journey following Christ, partly as a desire to increase the number of voices heard through this column and partly to bring inspiration and challenge to readers. So many lives of inspiration, courage, conviction and faith are lived humbly behind the scenes in their communities. I don't know how long I'll write this column or use it for this purpose, but it is my desire to bring to light some of these stories, like Jossimar's, not necessarily to bring fame or recognition to these people but to inspire readers to listen to the stories of people in their own congregations and communities, to listen for the voice of God through the daily, humble witness of people's lives.

FILM REVIEW

The Way (PG-13) follows Tom, an American doctor who comes to France to collect the remains of his adult son, killed in the Pyrenees in a storm while walking the Camino de Santiago, also known as The Way of Saint James. Tom decides to embark on the pilgrimage and scatter his son's ashes along the way. He meets other pilgrims, walking for various reasons, and they discover the power of community to overcome emptiness.—*Gordon Houser*

Margin Call (R) gives an incisive look at a 24-hour period at an investment bank in the early stages of the financial crisis. This well-written, well-acted film is an excellent fictional complement to last year's superb documentary *Inside Job*. It shows the human struggles as well as the perverse greed that helped create the economic downturn that resulted.—*gh*

BOOK REVIEWS

Killing Enmity

Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament by Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (BakerAcademic, 2011, $22.99) asks whether and how the violent death of the nonviolent Jesus points to the ultimate overcoming of all wrongs and all violence by the good and saving God in whom he trusted. It tackles difficult texts that challenge nonviolence and treats them honestly. Yoder Neufeld is a skilled guide as "we wrestle with the full humanity present in the pages of the New Testament and the full humanity of the community of listeners and wrestlers."—*gh*

Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life by William A. Dyrness (Eerdmans, 2011, $26) explores poetic theology, which addresses the dilemma of "a theology without poetry and a poetry without God." Dyrness writes: "To see and live in this world in terms of God's promised future is the secret to being in but not of the world."—*gh*

Building peaceful conversations

How often do you hear someone lament the polarizing, even hateful rhetoric in our society? And much of the media either reflects or engages in such speech. Yet examples of peaceful rhetoric exist, and we should pay attention to them.

One good example of a positive approach to such peaceful talk is the DVD *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*. Produced by Third Way Media, a department of MennoMedia of Mennonite Church USA, *Waging Peace* is airing this fall on many ABC stations across the country. But you need not wait for it to come to your local affiliate. Order a copy to show and discuss with your Sunday school class or small group.

Waging Peace

The one-hour documentary consists of interviews with Christian and Muslim scholars and tells stories of peacebuilding activities between Christians and Muslims.

The various scholars offer a fair if simplified history of Christianity and Islam how peacebuilding is at the root of each faith. This is helpful information for those unfamiliar with one or the other faith.

However, it's the stories that will speak more powerfully to most listeners. At Floradale (Ontario) Mennonite Church, pastor Fred Redekop and Muslim Imam Shafiq Hudda began having breakfast together, which led to their faith communities engaging in conversation, meals and volunteer projects, including making and knotting comforters together to give to refugees.

The film interviews Muslim and Mennonite students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ontario. These students' friendship outweighs their different beliefs.

Another story involves Christian Peacemaker Teams. Beth Pyles and Peggy Gish talk about applying the peace teachings of Jesus in violent situations in Iraq and other places.

Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology has founded, along with Jewish and Muslim scholars, the Claremont Lincoln University, which offers religious training in all three faith traditions.

An annual interfaith peace camp in Harrisonburg, Va., builds bridges of understanding for children and families from Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths. Children use art, writing, speaking, recreation, play and role-play and visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim places of worship. Mennonites are involved in this camp, which ends with a potluck meal of ethnic foods that brings together the parents as well.

The documentary acknowledges that not all is roses. It discusses a conflict between a Baptist congregation and an Islamic community that wants to build its worship center nearby.

The film promotes conversation without trying to convince the other of one's beliefs. Many viewers, I imagine, will not agree with such an approach.

Eboo Patel of Interfaith Youth Core describes his high school lunch table, which included a Hindu, a Jew, a Muslim, a Mormon, an Evangelical and a Catholic. "We got along fine," he says.

As Lynne Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago says, "The rising rhetoric of hatred [has become] deafening, and I thought, whatever your politics, whatever your religion, that just can't be right."

Waging Peace is available for purchase at www.WagingPeaceAlternatives.com. The price is $24.95. A two-minute preview of the documentary can be viewed at the website above. TM

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

These readers submitted answers

Don & Anita Beidler, Leola, Pa.
Bea Brunk, Bluffton, Ohio
Frank Brunk, Bluffton, Ohio
Alice Buller, Henderson, Neb.
Arlin & Maretta Buller, North Newton, Kan.
Nelda Buller, Tremont, Ill.
Brenda Burkey, Milford, Neb.
Lyle Burkholder, Waynesboro, Va.
Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.
Miriam Cochran, Hollsopple, Pa.
Larry & Janet Dixon, Topeka, Kan.
Jean E. Flores, Clovis, Calif.
Earl Frankenfield, Harleysville, Pa.
Karen Fretz, Lancaster, Pa.
Betty Friesen, Lake Oswego, Ore.
Elmer L. Friesen, Henderson, Neb.
Anna D. Gehman, Souderton, Pa.
Wilda Gingrich, Eureka, Ill.
Jerry & Rachel Graber, Parker, S.D.
Pearl Hartz, Escondido, Calif.
Esther F. Hartzler, Harrisonville, Mo.
Harley & Margaret Himes, Kidron, Ohio
Vileen Hostetler, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Harriet Kaufman, Freeman, S.D.
Phyllis Kehr, Goshen, Ind.
Nathan King, Cochranville, Pa.
Ethel Kolb, Myerstown Rd, Pa.
Renetta Kroeker, Inman, Kan.
Celia Lehman, Dalton, Ohio
Phyllis Lehman, Mt Eaton, Ohio
Betty Linscheid, Hesston, Kan.
Barbara Longoria, Greenwood, Ind.
Erma Maust, Bay Port, Mich.
Laverda McGowen, Middlebury, Ind.
Eldon Miller, Lederach, Pa.
Joann Miller, Bigfork, Mont.
Loren Miller, Aurora, Ore.
Marcile Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Susan Miller, Streetsboro, Ohio
Vernon & Margaret Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio
David Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va.
Frances Moser, Wooster, Ohio
Pauline Musselman, Souderton, Pa.
Jerry & Barb Newcomer, Seville, Ohio
Fern Nice, Albany, Ore.
Peter & Shirley Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio
Carolyn Rodman, Angola, Ind.
Brian & Betsi Roggie, Rochester, N.Y.
Odette Rolon, Archbold, Ohio
Carolyn Roth, North Newton, Kan.
Marilyn Roth, Shipshewana, Ind.
Willis & Darlene Roth, Grand Island, Neb.
Dwayne & Bonnie Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo.
Marlin Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio
Stan & Alma Schloneger, Louisville, Ohio
Junia Schmidt, Hesston, Kan.
LaVera Schrag, North Newton, Kan.
Allen Schrock, Lexington, Ind.
Myron & Phyllis Schultz, Greeley, Colo.
Ruth Shaum, Goshen, Ind.
Dorothy F. Shirk, Denver, Pa.
Ruth N. Showalter, Chambersburg, Pa.
Mary Jane Smith, Manheim, Pa.
Eugene & Alice Souder, Grottoes, Va.
Marilyn Stauffer, Elkhart, Ind.
Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.
Lillian Stoltzfus, Morgantown, Pa.
Paul & Bertha Swarr, Harrisonburg, Va.
Barbara Trahern, Turpin, Okla.
Maredith Vendrely, Leo, Ind.
Sam & Sarah Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.
Ivan & Ethel Wengerd, Kouts, Ind.
Elaine Widrick, Croghan, N.Y.
Rachel Wyse, Wellman, Iowa
Duane Yoder, Mechanicsville, Va.
Lois Yoder, Huntington, Pa.
Luke & Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio
Mary Kathryn Yoder, Harrisonville, Mo.
Elizabeth Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio
Leo Zook, Salem, Ore.
Andrea Zuercher, Lawrence, Kan.

Letters from crossword puzzlers

Editor's note: In our November issue we announced that the pages used for the crossword puzzle and the names of those who sent answers are among eight pages to be deleted beginning in January. The following sent letters of response:

I understand you may discontinue the crossword puzzle. I enjoy and look forward to doing them. I am glad you have the answers in the same issue. Please continue to print the puzzle. To save space quit printing the names of people who respond. I don't need that.—*Wilma Loganbill, Hesston, Kan.*

This is the first time I have submitted a finished crossword. They are usually not done by your deadline, and I don't really need to see my name in print. I did notice the comments about discontinuing the crossword because of low participation. There are lots of people like myself who enjoy them but don't bother to send them in because of time and a 44-cent stamp. I you don't find them significant enough to continue print, I won't argue with that. I doubt there are many who read everything in *The Mennonite*, so low participation should not be an issue.—*Loren L. Miller, Aurora, Ore.*

I love the crossword puzzles. I am learning so much about the Bible. Please continue them.—*Jean Flores, Clovis, Calif.*

Thanks, Jeanette

For the past two years, Jeanette Baer Showalter has created original crossword puzzles for our readers. We inherited the puzzle feature from another magazine we published for a while: *OurFaith Digest*.

"I want to thank all the readers who have enjoyed doing the puzzles each month," Jeanette says. "Creating them has always been a Bible study for me, and I sincerely hope that others have found them beneficial as well. The enjoyment I have had in sharing them with others will continue as I explore other options for publishing the many puzzles I have done in years past and those I am still creating. My best wishes go to *The Mennonite* and all its readers."

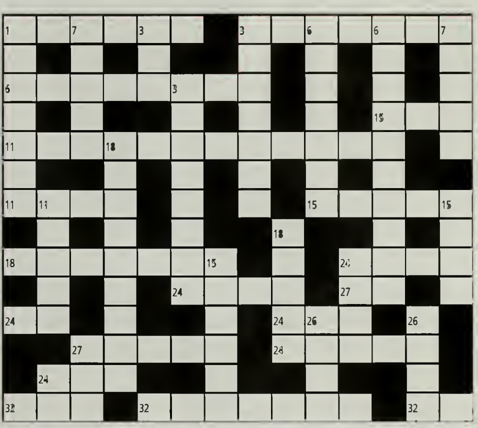
Final puzzle

As we announced last month, we will discontinue the crossword puzzle after this issue. We also will discontinue publishing the names of those who submit the puzzle answers. These two pages are among eight we will delete from future issues. Consequently, there is no form in this issue to submit answers to this month's puzzle for the February issue of *The Mennonite*. See also the editor's note on page 5.

The answers to this month's puzzle are on page 57.

Christmas hymns and songs

By Jeanette Baer Showalter



ACROSS
1. "The world in ___ stillness lay, to hear the angels sing."
4. "O Holy Child of Bethlehem! ___ to us, we pray."
8. "Silent night, holy ___, ___ is calm …" (2 words).
10. "___ earth receive her King"
11. "Sing all ye citizens of heav'n above; Glory to God ___ ___ ___ … O come let us …" (three words).
13. "From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of ___"
15. "…to save us all from ___'s power when we were gone astray …"
18. "… I ask Thee to stay close by me ___ and love me I pray …"
20. "___, Thou long-expected Jesus."
21. "Yet in thy ___ streets shineth the everlasting light …"
22. Some versions of "While Shepherds Watched" say, "the angel of the Lord came down," while others say, "__ angel of the Lord came down."
23. "How still __ see Thee lie!"
24. "No ___ may hear His coming, but in this world of sin …"
27. "I heard the ___ on Christmas Day."
28. "Whom angels greet with anthems ___ …"
29. "… veil'd in flesh the ___-head see …"
30. "Repeat the sounding ___ …"
31. "What child is this, who, laid to rest, __ ___ lap is sleeping?" (two words).
32. "Joyful, all __ nations, rise …"

DOWN
1. "Angels we have heard on high, '___ sweetly'" or "'sweetly ___' through the night …" (The *Mennonite Hymnal* reverses the traditional order).
2. "Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! ___ and life to all He brings …"
3. "The hopes and fears of all the years are ___ in Thee tonight."
4. "Echoing their brave ___ …"
5. "God and ___ reconciled!"
6. "Sing, choirs of angels, sing in ___ …"
7. "Hail th'incarnate ___, pleas'd as man with man to dwell …"
9. "Our lowly nature He hath not ___ …"
12. "Fear not, said he; for mighty dread __ ___ their troubled mind …" (two words)
14. " __ ___ let us adore Him …" (two words).
16. "The first ___ …"
17. "The cattle are lowing; the poor baby ___ …"
19. "O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ___ captive Israel …"
20. "Bless all the dear children in Thy tender ___ …"
25. "___ in a Manger"
26. "Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to ___ …"
27. "Mary's ___ child, Jesus Christ, was born on Christmas Day …"
29. "__ Tell It on the Mountain."

(Continued from page 5)

apply the confession of faith to corporate and individual life. In one paragraph of this piece, Thomas notes, in reference to different interpretations of the role of the confession, "This difference creates mischief. The most recent example: Western District Conference leaders and, subsequently, the conference gathering decided that a pastor's ministerial credentials were in order after she performed a same-sex marriage ceremony."

Apart from concern about labeling a conference's serious and honest efforts to discern a faithful way forward on a difficult issue as "mischief," the characterization of the delegate action is simply inaccurate. The delegates did not vote to affirm the Leadership Commission's action. The delegate vote upheld the Western District Conference policy that requires proposals for substantive actions be published in advance, giving congregations an opportunity to engage in their own discernment prior to delegate action. This WDC policy was in place prior to but mirrors the action taken in Pittsburgh by Mennonite Church USA delegates, affirming the importance of meaningful congregational involvement prior to conference-wide decisions on momentous issues.— *Clarence Rempel, WDC conference minister; Doug Penner, WDC moderator*

Opposing views on missions

Regarding Everett Thomas' call for greater support for missions (November): Thank you for that. However, let me stress that mission has always been holistic. I question the comment that "the former practice of sending Westerners into other countries has not been very effective."

How did the churches start and grow in many countries of the world if not through the work of missionaries, including many from the West?

As a missionary kid born in China and a long-term missionary in Japan, now retired, I can speak from experience. Most if not all missionaries work with the goal of creating indigenous churches through the power of the Holy Spirit in which believers "take the gospel to their families, friends and co-workers."

Certainly that was always the aim of Mennonite missionaries in Japan. The figures, if we look at numbers of conversions, lead one to conclude we were not very successful. Four percent Christian in Japan is optimistic, and the most recent figures I have seen are 1-2 percent. Nevertheless, encouraging believers to share the good news was always our missionaries' goal.

The reasons for the differences between the growth of the church in China and Japan since World War II are complex and have little to do with mission strategy. Christians in China have been persecuted, and the government has often been unstable. In Japan, the government has been stable and the church has had total freedom to operate. We do well to remember that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

The explosion of information technology and the great ease of travel have brought new opportunities for mission. Can we welcome and use these without denigrating the work of missionaries in the past 100 years? For they, like we, were products of their time. We still need long-term missionaries who will live among people long enough to become true partners in mission. And can we welcome immigrants to North America who seek to learn our culture and become true partners with them in mission here?—*Alice Ruth Ramseyer, Bluffton, Ohio*

The November editorial reminds me of the story of the Inuit hunter and the Mennonite missionary:

"If I did not know about God and sin, would I go to hell?" said the hunter.

"No," replied the missionary, "not if you did not know."

"Then why," asked the Inuit earnestly, "did you tell me?"

In the editorial's fourth bullet point, Thomas makes several astute observations—that we're no longer sure Jesus is the only way, that there's no need to hold Christian faith as extraordinary, that we're repelled by coercion in evangelism tactics. But Thomas then seems to conclude these are not positive developments. I suggest they are.

Christian mission, historically, has always gone hand-in-hand with cultural extermination. Even the gentlest of mission efforts is an exercise in belittling the way God works and dwells in the lives of his non-Christian children. Moving away from belief in Christian supremacy means we join the civilized world in respecting the integrity of others. Maybe someday, rather than sending out missionaries to persuade people that their beliefs are wrong, Mennonites will send out young people to investigate the truth and beauty in other cultures and bring that knowledge home for our enrichment and edification.—*Charlie Kraybill, Bronx, N.Y. (on behalf of the Marginal Mennonite Society)*

We need verbal witness

Regarding "As You Go ... Are You Preaching or Walking?" (October): I celebrate with Don Clymer and the group of young adults that "the relationships developed during the week in Mexico profoundly changed people on both sides of the cultural divide."

I am disappointed, however, that Clymer seems to use that experience to negate the importance of verbal witness (what he calls preaching) and infers that our actions are an adequate, preferred way of witness.

Jesus "walked and preached" and commands us to do likewise.
—Lawrence Greaser, Goshen, Ind.

Investing in Hope: Speaking of sin

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.—1 Thessalonians 5:8 TNIV

Many of us find it difficult to talk about sin these days, even in church services. It's just not in vogue in modern America. Even at our recent churchwide convention at Pittsburgh, when the theme passage was 2 Corinthians 5:11–20, I didn't hear much conversation about sin.

It may sound strange to some ears, but I am suggesting that one way to invest in hope is to talk more freely about sin. And salvation. It is hard to get to the latter without the former. That's what Barbara Brown Taylor says in her book *Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation*. It's worth listening to what she has to say.

As psychiatrist Karl Menninger said in his book *Whatever Happened to Sin?*, Taylor notes that we have redefined sin by labeling wrong acts as either crime or illness. You treat the former by legal means and the latter by medical means. Who needs salvation from God?

If we are to bring healing to our world, Taylor asserts, "sin is our only hope." How so? Because sin reminds us of the need for salvation, grace and repentance. As Anabaptists, we believe that God remedies sin by calling us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by transforming us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Without a robust understanding of sin, we will have little expectation or capacity for spiritual transformation.

As the apostle Paul made clear in his letter to the Thessalonians, we live in a moral universe. There are good deeds and there are evil deeds. Granted, many things fall into shades of gray. But we are called to be children of the light and of the day. Sober reflection invites us to protect ourselves by donning faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. This is how we invest in hope for the future.

Our ethical behaviors grow out of gratitude for God's action in saving us. Not solely by some act of justification but in the ongoing transformation of our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

As Anabaptist Christians, we believe in the paradox of faith and works as partners in grace. We know that if we are to heal others, we ourselves must have experienced healing.

In Taylor's words, "Our lives are God's sign language in a sin-sick world, and God has promised us the grace we need to point the way home."

I am not calling for a return to moralistic preaching that points out the sins of others along simplistic lines that too readily condemns "obvious" personal sins or moral failures while overlooking or winking at less obvious corporate sins. I believe, for example, that racism is a besetting sin of Mennonite Church USA. The more I am becoming aware of the way racism shapes my own actions, the more I see the need to repent of the damage it wreaks on others.

Rather, I am calling for us to receive salvation as a gift of shalom from God, who intends to heal the whole creation of its wrongs. We set things right in a broken world by being alert to those wrongs, by repenting of our sin and by looking to God for the grace to become different people.

One way to invest in hope is to talk more freely about sin. And salvation. It is hard to get to the latter without the former.

True repentance calls us to take responsibility for our own deeds in the fallen world and to join others who are dedicated to turning things around. The church is not called to be a courtroom or a medical clinic but a community of faith that is yoked with Jesus, walking shoulder-to-shoulder toward a new horizon that glows with healing and hope for all God's world.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

*******************************CAR-RT LOT**C059
134561 944 01-JAN-13 66994
ASSOC MENN BIBLICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
3003 BENHAM AVE
ELKHART IN 46517-1947
P-2 P66
1847

A Christmas compromise

Everett J. Thomas

In the past I wrote about the importance of not singing about Christmas during the Advent season. But I am changing my mind. Singing Christmas hymns and carols need not diminish the meaning of Advent.

Some Mennonite congregations and their leaders feel strongly that only Advent songs should be sung during the four Sundays before Christmas. This relegates Christmas hymns and carols to the 12 days after Christmas. But there are reasons to change this practice that has come into congregational life over the last two decades:

- Families often vacation during the holiday season, and the children are not in church. We may be raising a new generation that does not know the words to "Away in the Manger" or "Silent Night" when we do not sing them before Christmas. Further, they will hear the instrumental versions in shopping malls and stores and associate the melodies primarily with a secular Christmas. It will be a great loss to the future church if members do not have an emotional and spiritual connection to the songs we sing a cappella and in four-part harmony.
- Worship planners often want the morning's songs and hymns to connect with the sermon text. There are far fewer Advent hymns than Christmas hymns from which to choose when the sermon is preached from the Advent text.
- Christmas carols and hymns are in our psyches. They provide the emotional and spiritual field for the way we experience the season. Case in point: The words of "Joy to the World" are not about Christmas. In fact, the song is not even in the section of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* designated for "Jesus' Birth." Yet we seldom sing this song at any other time of the year because it is so ingrained in our psyches as a Christmas carol.

Singing Christmas hymns and carols need not diminish the meaning of Advent.

For congregations grappling with this issue, here's a compromise: Observe Advent the first two Sundays after Thanksgiving and then begin celebrating Christmas the last two Sundays.

Why not just spend all of December singing Christmas songs? Because it is important to remind ourselves of Mary's experience as she waited for Jesus to be born. On page 8, Isaac Villegas' Grace and Truth column describes the importance of this pregnant pause each year. For congregations that do not observe the Advent season at all, leaders might consider doing so at least on one Sunday.

While some congregations may have observed the seasons of the church year before the 1990s, I recall the practice spreading quickly during that decade. And I am grateful for the change. Cycling through the biblical story each year has deeply enriched our worship life: When the preaching follows lectionary texts during the church year, more of the Bible is preached than happens when there is no structure.

But we need not lock ourselves into the seasons of the church year, especially when doing so diminishes our worship because we sing no carols and Christmas hymns.—*ejt*

Changes in *The Mennonite*

Several changes will be coming to *The Mennonite* in January. To offset mailing costs and paper price increases set for next month, we will reduce the number of pages to 56. We will discontinue the poetry page, cut four pages from the feature section, one page from the news section and the two pages that carry the crossword puzzle and the names of those who send in the puzzle answers.

From time-to-time we try new columns. The Real Families column was one of those new columns four years ago. However, we will discontinue that column in January and introduce a new one on global Anabaptism. Thanks to the Real Families columnists: Michael King, Rachel Ringenberger Miller, Gerald Shenk and Regina Shands Stoltzfus.—*ejt*